PUBLIC
S.F.
LIBRARY

3 1223 00222 9129

B AY82a 172427

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

VITA SINE LITERIS MORS EST

FORM 3431 10-50

PAGES FROM THE PAST

BY

JOHN AYSCOUGH

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1922

All rights reserved

B
A·y 82a

172427

To

MRS. WILLIAM ARKWRIGHT

Sutton Scarsdale, Chesterfield

Dear Mrs. Arkwright

It is very kind of you to allow me to dedicate this little book to you.

In asking you to stand godmother to it, I had no better reason to give than that you liked the book. I only hope that many other people may like it as well, so that you may not be ashamed of your godchild.

It is a pity that some of the chapters could not be told so fully, in print, as they were told vivâ voce *to you. But the heirs and assigns of people who have acted oddly are apt to like keeping to themselves the legacies of queerness to which they stand heirs.*

Yours very sincerely
John Ayscough

PAGES FROM THE PAST

CHAPTER I

I TAKE it that any man of my age can, by the aid of personal Memory and Experience, contrast two worlds as different as any that ever existed.

I can, it is true, remember neither Crimean War nor Indian Mutiny, but the latter was barely ended when I was born—in a snow-storm, on the day when Bernadotte saw for the first time the Blessed Virgin among the rocks of the scarp down by the Gave hard by Lourdes. Both Mutiny and Crimean War were still matters of current talk, as affairs of yesterday or the day before. In, or rather just outside, the Welsh village where we lived, lodged a gentle, moody, half-sane officer who had had the appalling task of giving the order on parade for blowing certain native mutineers from the guns. He had given the order, but his reason had given way. When we knew him, but a year or two later, he was only partly recovered; and I remember him very well—remember especially how unwilling he was to offer any

stranger his hand *lest they should shrink from the blood upon it.*

At that time and in the same place we knew also the wife of Smith O'Brien, and that acquaintance served to bring nearer to oneself the events of that single-minded enthusiast's rebellion, which also had, of course, occurred before my own birth. Talk of Smith O'Brien naturally would lead our Irish mother to tell us about the 'cholera-year,' about the famine, and the terrible miseries and sufferings that accompanied and followed it: all of which she had seen, for she did not marry and leave Ireland till three years after the famine.

She and my father were both born in George IV.'s reign: born, of course, before Catholic Emancipation, or the passing of the great Reform Bill, while the agitation for both was in full blast.

Both of my grandfathers were born in the reign of George III., but my father's father was born, 142 years ago, in 1780, three years before England lost her American Colonies, nine before the French Revolution, and twenty-one before the Legislative Union between England and Ireland. The planet Uranus was still undiscovered, and Napoleon was undiscovered too, a little boy of eleven years old.

My English grandsire's father lived under George II., and saw the Partition of Poland.

One of my Irish great-grandmothers lived to

the age of 109 years, after having brought her husband twenty-six children, of whom only two lived to grow up, and only one married. She must have been born far back in the reign of George II.

At this moment I have, alive and well in France,[1] though, alas, blind, a great friend whose first husband's first wife was born in 1727! Her second husband, whom I knew and loved well, was nephew to two Queens of the Napoleonic era: Désirée Clary, wife of Charles XIV., King of Sweden and Norway, of the Goths and of the Wends; and Julie Clary, wife of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, elder brother of Napoleon I. My friend remembered these four sovereigns very well, and had been Aide-de-Camp to Bernadotte, Charles XIV. of Sweden.

Another old friend of mine well remembered the widow of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, grandson of James II., called by eighteenth-century Whigs the Young Pretender, and by Jacobites His Majesty King Charles III. This friend of mine, as a little girl, used to attend the receptions given by the royal widow once a week while she resided in Florence. The Queen sat upon a dais, and the general company made curtseys or bows and passed on, but the little girl was made to come on the dais, and receive the royal lady's embrace,

[1] Alive and well when the words above were written: but now, alas, gone to her long-desired rest.

and hear herself addressed as 'My cousin'—she being grand-daughter of Charles Duke of Kingston, whose grandfather was Charles II. This royal Stuart widow was by birth Princess Louise of Stolberg, and her life was more romantic than happy or edifying. While he lived, her best and kindest friend was her brother-in-law the Cardinal Duke of York, 'Henry IX.,' the last of the royal Stuarts: the last even titular sovereign of Britain who 'touched' for the 'King's Evil': touch-pieces given by him are still in existence, bearing the rather pathetic, wistful inscription, 'Henry IX., not by the wish of men, but by the will of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Cardinal Duke of York, Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church.'

It seems oddly to bridge time that a man like myself, sixty-three years of age, should have had an intimate friend who knew well a lady by marriage grand-daughter of James II., and great-grand-daughter of Charles I. This friend of mine was called Mrs. Ellice, and her home was at Hampton Court Palace. She was entirely of the old *régime*, and was, I am sure, convinced that the 'lower orders' were of different flesh and blood from herself, kind and charitable as she could be to any of them who needed her help.

The Chartist troubles were over ten years before my birth, but another old friend of mine,

Mrs. Ambrose de Lisle, of Garendon Park, in Leicestershire, used to describe very amusingly how the rioters marched out one night in hundreds from Loughborough: to the family, seated at dinner, an ancient and very decrepit lodge-keeper announced the arrival of this formidable array. He was armed with a venerable shot-gun, and to the Squire he spake thus: 'They'm outside the lodge. I've barred the gates. Is it your pleasure, Squire, as I should put them to death?'

By no means bloodthirsty, indeed the gentlest and kindest of men, Mr. de Lisle went out himself and managed to persuade the poor fellows to go away unhurt and without hurting anyone else. Ambrose de Lisle (the Eustace Lyle of Lord Beaconsfield's 'Coningsby') had become a Catholic in 1824, years before the Oxford Movement resulted in the secession from the Establishment of Newman, Ward, Lockhart, Ignatius Spencer, Faber, Oakley, etc. From the day of that new birth to the day of his death the absorbing interest of de Lisle's life was his religion, and the Conversion of England. He was dead before I knew his family, but his influence was living still, and his monument was the Catholic congregation of surrounding villages. To one of these Cardinal Manning preached, observing afterwards that it was the first time since his own conversion that he had addressed from the altar an

Anglo-Saxon congregation. But the great Ullathorne would also come and preach to these convert audiences. During a certain function the young grandson of his host, the present Squire of Garendon, was acting as Crozier-Bearer to the bishop, and was somewhat distracted, perhaps amused, at something which caught his vagrant eye.

'What,' demanded the prelate, 'is that thing you're 'olding?'

'The Crozier, my lord.'

'Well, and what's it for? . . . to 'it boys' 'eads with that don't know 'ow to be'ave.'

Ullathorne, like Mr. de Lisle, was fervently 'Gothic': and someone on another occasion was less instructed in Gothic articles and their names. Gothic copes are not fastened with a tab and hooks, but with a brooch, or morse, often very large, of beautiful design and craftsmanship.

The bishop's assistant gave him the cope, but without the morse.

'Morse!' demanded the prelate.

'My lord?'

'MORSE!!!'

'I beg your lordship's pardon.'

'M, O, R, S, E. Morse. Morse. MORSE. To 'ook the cope with.'

The name of Bishop Ullathorne may be almost unknown to the non-Catholic reader, but it is venerated among English Catholics. From a

cabin-boy he rose to be one of the greatest prelates of post-reformation England; and, though he dropped h's, he wrote the most scholarly, the purest and finest English.

It is not necessary to conclude that the dropped h's were due to his obscure beginnings. When I became a Catholic, forty-four years ago, I sometimes met old-fashioned country gentlemen, of high birth and breeding, whose h's were very uncertain. I was told it was due to education abroad. Not long ago I was talking to a foreign lady of royal rank, who was so kind as to carry on our conversation in English, which she talked quite as well as I could; but she mentioned her 'usband more than once, and complained slightly of 'eadache.

Here is another anecdote of Bishop Ullathorne:—

Ullathorne was preaching, or rather about to preach. With impressive deliberation he gave his text, 'Domine non sum dignus.' Before he had time to give the English translation of it, a little boy in the sanctuary, to whom, as an habitual server at Mass, the Latin words were familiar, and conveyed 'one clear call' for *him*, seized the gong-hammer and struck a loud and resonant boom. The congregation understood and devoted itself to gravity. The bishop turned a severe eye towards the sanctuary: turned again to the people and repeated his text with more austerity, 'Domine non sum dignus.' The boy, finding the repetition quite

in order, struck the gong again. The congregation found solemnity more difficult and more obligatory than before. Dr. Ullathorne's eastward glance was more pregnant with protest and severity. Once again he turned to the people, and a third time, in deeper tones, gave his text, 'Domine non sum dignus.' All along the traditionally minded boy had counted on a third time, and punched his gong again. Then the bishop spoke in the vernacular.

'Take,' he commanded, 'that 'ammer out of that child's 'and.'

Another liturgical episode. When the Abbey Church at Fort Augustus was opened there was, of course, a function, and the local paper reported the proceedings with bland civility. 'At this juncture,' it said, 'the officiating dignitary observed *Pax Vobis*, to which the deacon (we understand) appropriately replied *Et cum spiritu tuo*.'

CHAPTER II

I BEGAN the previous chapter by remarking that any man of my age can out of his own memory contrast two worlds as different as any that the history of the world can present.

Railways were a new thing in the days of my earliest childhood: at the little Welsh town of Llangollen, which is the first place I can remember, though I was born in Yorkshire, we had arrived by coach; and I recollect very clearly the coming thither of the first train.

In country towns, at least, the railway was held to be not only a new, but 'a fond thing vainly invented.' The prosperity of such places was, rightly or wrongly, supposed to have been destroyed by the disappearance of the coaches, and the consequent cessation of the traffic on the old coach-roads. Once-thriving inns, of considerable standing, and in many cases of some celebrity, had been reduced to the rank of hedge-taverns: the travelling public came to them no more, their bedrooms and coffee-rooms were left deserted;

and the neighbouring farmer no longer found in them convenient customers for his oats, his hay and straw; his butter and eggs, cheese, milk and cream; his beef and mutton.

The Penny Post was itself almost a new thing: the electric telegraph *was* a new thing, and the receiving and sending of telegrams was almost a sign of a class—the middle classes seldom sent or received a telegraphic message: the arrival of one could throw a whole household into a flutter of trepidation.

Post-cards were uninvented, and when they burst upon the public it received them with suspicion. They would, it was grimly surmised, destroy the whole privacy of correspondence, everybody would know everybody else's affairs—as if the use of them were to be matter of compulsion. Yet I do not remember hearing anyone forebode their use by the libeller, or foresee how they would appeal to the horrible class of anonymous letter-writers.

A half-ounce letter to New Zealand, and to most of our colonies, I think, cost sixpence throughout my childhood. Parcel-post was undreamed of long after I had ceased to be a child.

There were no telephones.

In the large towns the horse-omnibus rattled and clattered on its way, making very bad weather over cobbled pavements, or indifferent roads.

Electric trams were not yet dreamed of.

Motor-cars, motor-omnibuses, motor-lorries were not to come till middle age had come to me. Flying, of course, was the business of 'feathered creation,' though Tennyson in 'Locksley Hall' pictured the commerce of the future as being carried through the air.

People of moderate means and station travelled little. Sir John Lubbock had not enriched the Calendar with his four great holidays of obligation. There were no 'week-ends,' and people who stayed in country-houses stayed longer, though they might not come so far. In the big towns, except in Scotland, there were no flats: if the term was used at all it was applied to country cousins: the privacy of each *ménage* was perpendicular, not, as so often now, horizontal. And there was far more privacy—people dined at home or in the house of a friend; except on a journey no one thought of dining at an hotel, and the restaurant of to-day was unimagined. To entertain guests except at one's own table, in one's own house, was undreamt of: if dreamed of, it would have seemed a nightmare of incongruity.

The enormous fortunes of these days were not: one of the heroines of one of Anthony Trollope's finest books he calls over and over again the richest woman in England; he speaks, almost with awe, of her fabulous wealth; but he

does not venture to hint that she had more than two hundred thousand pounds.

Not only was there less wealth, there was much less expenditure, among the wealthy and among those not wealthy. Dress was less profuse: jewels were less worn—were scarcely seen on anyone of any rank by daylight: tiaras were worn only by ladies who could have (like Lady Glanmire) sat down to tea in coronets had they chosen. Hospitality was at least as genuine, but it was far less showy, and perhaps was extended more exclusively to intimate friends. The sport afforded to country-house guests was not ruinously expensive to provide, and shooting lunches were not epicurean feasts. The owners of country-houses could afford to entertain oftener, and people of more moderate means could afford to be entertained: nor did people of immoderate means find it so easy to be entertained there: the doors of such houses were not then fitted with locks that could be opened at will by patent golden keys. There was better talk, and much less gabble. A good talker was not then esteemed ponderous, or a bore. Wit did not consist in apposite quotations from music-hall tags—there were no music-halls in the present sense of the word. I cannot help thinking that society was more cheerful, though there was much less amusement, and far more decorum. Good breeding was not held to be

bourgeois. Courtesy of speech and conduct was not 'middle-class.' There was more originality of thought and wit, for mere aberration of thought did not count as originality, and originality of speech did not consist in a sort of slang of unorthodox expression. People, I seem to remember, talked less of themselves, and never talked at all of their diseases or the operations they had undergone or were about to undergo. No one gratified the public with a diagnosis of the state of his own insides, or mentioned what parts of them had been removed: certain diseases, such as cancer, were never mentioned in conversation; only the Bob Sawyers would have talked dissecting-room at table, and perhaps not even Bob Sawyer sober, in a clean shirt, and in decent company.

There was perhaps more ceremony: there was certainly more politeness. The general tone was more courteous and more urbane—if less intimate, and less free. The motto seemed to be 'Everyone for everyone else and God for us all'; instead of 'Everyone for himself and the Devil take the hindmost.'

In public places people made, I think, less noise: in private houses they made better *mots*, and a good one was recognised and acclaimed. The recognition of wit calls for the same qualities as the utterance of it; a fine *mot* flies undetected over the head of pessimism, the great blunter of wit.

There was much more quotation, because people read the sort of books which furnish quotation: books which no one would attempt to read twice cannot be quoted once. There was also more anecdote—I set it down as a confession; for of course no young modern would listen to an anecdote: he would not have time—unless it were told on the music-hall stage, where it is borne with on chance of an indiscreet climax.

Your modern suffers not bores gladly, and it must be allowed that the anecdotist of my youth could bore *tandem*. He couldn't now, because (as they say in Ireland) he wouldn't be let. Certain names, certain faces, rising up in memory, are linked with certain stories as indissolubly as Dr. Johnson's figure suggests a coffee-coloured suit. Where they were those stories were, always, always: and very long stories too, whose quasi-point came half-way through. That is indeed deadly—where even the point does not bring release. Our modern youths and maidens wouldn't stand that: their instinct of self-preservation is faultless, and the most cultivated thing about them.

Children were very different: they were far less prettily dressed, and far more economically; and they were of meeker deportment. The pleasant child of to-day is gracious, the unpleasant very far from being gracious. The good-humoured

child of my own childish days did not condescend: but he laughed more and was more easily pleased. I doubt if the present-day child would deign to be amused by the Pantomime that delighted the children of the early 'sixties, which was not so like a *revue* as the Pantomime of to-day. Our grandmammas cackled merrily over our Pantomimes; there are no grandmammas now, only superannuated girls whose sons and daughters happen to have children.

Of course ladies all wore enormous crinolines: no wonder they never entered hansom cabs, for there would have been room for no one else—if there would have been room for *them*—which there would *not* have been with the doors closed. I suppose Aurora Floyd ran away with the groom in a crinoline, but it must have been inconvenient; and Lady Audley no doubt committed her murder in a crinoline, but it sounds incredible.

Talking of novels, they were all in three volumes at thirty-one and six: but what novels these were! Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer-Lytton, Wilkie Collins, Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, Mrs. Oliphant, Miss Braddon were all alive and all writing. Charlotte Brontë was alive; Maria Edgeworth had not been dead ten years.

We knew Bulwer-Lytton's wife, who had an affectionate habit of alluding to him as the Goat. I now know a very charming great-grand-daughter

of hers, who is also great-great-grand-daughter of Byron; and I remember the Lady Lovelace whose husband had first married Byron's only daughter. Two of my greatest and most valued friends are daughters of the gentleman who married Sir Walter Scott's grand-daughter, heiress of Abbotsford. My mother knew Anthony Trollope: the first time she went to his house he popped out from behind the hall-door and squeaked 'Boh!' as it opened, thinking she was Mrs. Trollope. Whether he would in any case have assumed the airs of a great author, may be doubted, for he was the simplest of men; but after that introduction he certainly did not attempt it. Someone also gave my mother an introduction to Edmund Yates, then, I think, editing *The Illustrated London News*, but Mrs. S. C. Hall advised her not to deliver it—not, I fancy, as apprehending too stiff and stilted a reception. Charles Lever I saw once, and the author of 'Lothair' but once—he was obliging enough to look exactly like his cartoons in *Punch*. The author of 'Juventus Mundi' I saw a few times, and he had the same *complaisance*, though what struck my youthful fancy most was the faithful resemblance of his trousers to those in the caricatures. He was not yet acclaimed as the Grand Old Man, but was rather held (in the Tory circles of my childhood) to be old enough to know better.

Sir Charles Dilke wrote to thank me for a

radical pamphlet, a charming little letter which I have still: he probably was unaware that the author was a boy. Of course, the pamphlet had been sent to him with the writer's compliments (it was called 'How Ben Behaved Himself'), but really not to extract his autograph. I had ceased to collect autographs. At eleven years of age I was in hot (and nefarious) pursuit of them. Disraeli's was obtained by a manœuvre I still blush to recall. The great statesman received a brief letter of inquiry as to whether he really *did* recommend Elijah Smart as footman. By return of post he cleared himself of the imputation of ever having employed a footman with such a name. From a very august lady her signature was requested on the simple ground that, 'though but eleven years of age,' the aspirant would like it. On a sheet of Windsor note-paper came back the legend *Victoria R.*: a signature never again sent to the applicant till it came to him on his Army Commission—countersigned by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—and varied then by the additional initial 'I.' Giuseppe Mazzini conceded his autograph for no special reason stated, but merely to oblige. At thirteen years of age the same ambitious boy demanded of the Empress Eugénie permission to dedicate his first novel to Her Majesty: but the reply came from Mlle. de Larminat. A week or two before the war I told the Empress of

this, and she said at once, 'It must have been about 1871': it was in 1871.

During my autograph craze, I knew an old lady who cut off the royal signatures from several 'Waterloo' and 'Peninsular' Commissions, as she called them, apparently under the impression that the legend 'George P.' was of more interest than the documents.

Frank-collecting was still a vogue when I was a child, and I have seen on those yellow, faded outsides of letters (I was going to write 'envelopes') the signatures of nearly every politician of the early nineteenth century. In childhood I had a high sense of the dignity of the House of Commons, not out of any political bias against the House of Lords, but because an intimate friend on election to the Lower Chamber tipped me a shilling for every finger on my two hands. I wish every Member would do as much now.

There was no ballot when my friend was elected, and I do not think he minded: for the electors of Grantham were 'commonly of the same opinion as' Earl B., his cousin. Rotten eggs were then still the great argument, though the boroughs of that ilk had gone with the good old times: a sure seat was good for silk hats.

Bishop Selwyn of Lichfield confirmed me, but I remember very well his predecessor, Bishop Lonsdale (who sounds quite prehistoric), a great friend of my English grandfather. I wish I could truth-

fully say he wore a wig, but I suppose he had done so not many years before I knew him. Montalembert saw him enter the House of Lords in rochet, gown, and lawn-sleeves, and 'supposed it was a Peeress in her own right.'

At twelve years of age I was taken to see a bishop (of Trinidad) consecrated, and was asked what I thought of it. 'It seems,' I confessed, influenced by the prolixity of the process, 'very difficult.'

An observant child, I noted that all the heads of Cathedral chapters were 'Mr. Dean,' and concluded that the office was hereditary in one family. The Archdeacon of our district spent a summer in Spain with his wife and her sister: the polyglot waiter at Zaragosa explained him as 'Un Evêque Anglais avec ses deux femmes': Anglican priests having a wife apiece, the good man jumped to the conclusion that English Bishops could have two, *propter majorem dignitatem*. The Archdeacon himself thought this hard, 'For,' said he, 'I travelled incogn.' 'As what?' asked my friend the tipping M.P. 'Oh! as a gentleman,' replied the Venerable.

It was rumoured of him that he refused to license a curate on the ground that the unlucky youth could not decide off-hand how many Apostles there were after the Resurrection. 'Twelve, if you only count Matthias,' he surmised; 'thirteen after St. Paul cropped up.' I cannot defend 'cropped up' nor his blindness to the fact that

St. James had by then been subtracted from the total.

Many years later I knew an undergraduate who was more astute. Though he had recently turned Catholic (a circumstance clearly remembered by his Examiners) he chose to 'take in' the Book of Common Prayer, as a subject he was pretty well up in. 'Now, Mr. V.,' inquired one of his tormentors, 'what have you to say concerning marriage?' If he said it was a Sacrament, he would be done; and he couldn't, as a Catholic, say it wasn't. 'Well,' he replied, with a smile, child-like and bland, like that of the Heathen Chinee, and surveying his Examiner (who had a large and perfectly legitimate family) with babyish innocence, and in the very words of the Article, 'it is *either* a state of life allowed by Christ, or else—a corrupt following of the Apostles.' The bachelor Dons gave it he had 'answered right.'

A week or two after that brilliant response I called, in his rooms at Oriel, for another undergraduate, who had also lately joined the Mother and Mistress of Churches. He sat in an arm-chair with legs stretched out, entirely *désœuvré*. 'Aren't you coming to lecture?' 'No.' (It was 11 A.M.) 'What *are* you doing?' 'I am fasting. It is the Vigil of All Saints. I can't do two things at once.'

I wish everyone would engrave that maxim on his mind: especially such as wish to be really good and to edify the public at the same time.

CHAPTER III

It was not to obtain their 'autographs' that I wrote, at various times, as a boy, to Canon Liddon, Canon Carter of Clewer, Mr. Mackonochie, Dr. Pusey, and Bishop Forbes of Brechin: but because I hoped they might be able to convince me that I really was already a Catholic, and need not, if I wanted to *be* one, become one. Each of those illustrious men took the trouble to answer my letters, and with one of them, Canon Carter, I had a more or less sustained correspondence; but I had no personal acquaintance with any of them, though later on I used to see Dr. Pusey fairly often during the very short time I was at Oxford as an undergraduate. He did not look at all like the mental picture I had imagined of him, in which I had endowed him with great personal beauty of an ethereal, spiritual type. My fancy picture showed a tall, very slim, indeed attenuated, figure, an ascetic face with faultless features, large and very dark flaming eyes, and a movement all supple grace. I believe my idea of the famous doctor was suggested by the well-known picture of St. Augustine, in which he

is shown seated with his mother at a window—a picture in which, I have since been told, the author of the 'Confessions' is really made to bear a strong resemblance to Canon Liddon. In real life I found that the eponymous hero of Puseyism was rather donnish-looking than mediæval; as if he might be austere, not merely to himself, but to unsatisfactory undergraduates also; and easier to realise as the great Hebrew scholar than as collaborator with Newman in a great personal movement.

Newman himself I only saw twice, and at a much later date. Of him I had, of course, seen many portraits, and could see how they were like him, and how the best of them failed to be entirely like.

Cardinal Manning was thoroughly aware of the amount of legend that, even in his own day, gathered round his name. He once said to me, over his fire, 'My dear boy, I hereby authorise you to deny utterly nine out of every ten stories you may ever hear about me, and nineteen out of every twenty statements concerning me you may read in the newspapers.' While thanking His Eminence for these faculties, I ventured to hint that in exercising them I might be in doubt as to the reserved cases.

'Which nine, and which nineteen?' I murmured.

'Do not be *subtil*,' advised the Cardinal (who never was), sniffing slightly and wagging an

admonitory foot. 'Contradict any nine statements you are taught to believe, and any nineteen you think sound probable.'

Remembering which was 'more subtil' than any beast of the field, I naturally resolved to eschew 'subtilty,' and have stuck to simplicity ever since. (A near relation thus passed judgment on one of my earliest works: 'I didn't expect anything I liked, but I thought you'd push for cleverness. It's as simple as a nursery tale.' No prophet ever had a larger country of his own than the present writer.)

But I did not know Cardinal Manning in the days of my correspondence with Bishop Forbes, Canons Liddon and Carter, Mr. Mackonochie, etc. As I have said, I did not know *them*—perhaps they diagnosed me as an ancient country gentleman. When I first did meet the Cardinal we also had corresponded, and I regret to say he laughed.

'Why?' my blushes inquired. And he answered very genially:

'Don't be offended, my dear boy' (I was twenty, and looked sixteen), 'I had imagined you to be an elderly squire.'

The ecclesiastics of my acquaintance were mostly country parsons of moderate views, though some were 'High and Dry,' some few of almost dizzy 'height' (for those simple days), and my two grandfathers uncompromisingly low. They were mostly well-born, a fact seldom forgotten by their

wives; and I remember them almost all as being pleasant, not aggressively ecclesiastical in manner, though in dress more rigidly correct than the generality of Anglican clergy nowadays. I believe my absolutely Calvinistic Irish grandfather would rather have worn a red hat than have been seen abroad in the peaked cap wherewith so many clergymen now condescend to temper the awe of the laity—a cap much affected also by charwomen.

Our own Vicar was, by predilection, High Church, and even heard confessions; but would have blushed to find it fame. But his large congregation of opulent farmers and small tradesmen was of traditional sympathies (a tradition, however, dating from the eighteenth century only) and suspicious of visible novelties, and he was not given to surprising their eyes or ears. Nowadays he would be held terribly easy-going; and perhaps he unconsciously drew his own silhouette portrait when he said, pleasantly, that all he required in his curates was a couple of gentlemanly *aides-de-camp*. If anyone desires more studied portraits of the country clergy of my youth he may find whole galleries of them in Anthony Trollope's never sufficiently admired Barsetshire novels.

Though Gracechurch, our little town, was richly supplied with dissenting chapels, one never had much ken of the Nonconformist ministers. I fancy some of them were only 'Rev.' on Sundays:

though I remember one, perennially so, whose garden joined ours, and I could never perceive anything strikingly sectarian in his mild devotion to horticulture. On the whole Gracechurch was much more like Cranford than Middlemarch, and there was no stir of Church *versus* Chapel polemic: none of our chapels were Salem Chapels, and a Dissenting Minister was as socially remote as the Grand Lama of Tibet. The most rabidly Low Church of our ladies would not have dreamed of inviting a 'Ranty Parson' to a party, indeed she might have been in some dread of entertaining her own grocer unawares. Blood may be thicker than water, but class was very much 'thicker' than creed in Gracechurch. The nearest really High Church clergyman was of an undeniable 'county' family, and it covered the multitude of crosses in his church and on his coloured stoles.

We were too well instructed to think, like Uncle Pullet, of a bishop as a sort of baronet, who might, or might not, be in holy orders. But a bishop not oftener than once in three years or so swam into our ken, and then we were apt to survey his 'magpie' with a mild surmise, silent as to how on earth he got it on, lest our conjecture should be incorrect and betray ignorance of high matters. We knew that the bishop's wife was not Her Ladyship, and thought it hard: it seems to me harder still in the frequent cases now where the prelate

is also a knight; to make a man a knight and not let his wife be My Lady is a sort of Anglican equivalent for the unsatisfactoriness of being a Cardinal *in petto*, a kind of fact without any consequences.

It was not at Gracechurch, but while I was at school at Lichfield, that Bishop Selwyn confirmed me. In a subsequent *tête-à-tête* he gave me the impression of considering me odd: hardly had the disappearance of childhood relieved me from the incubus of dreading to see in my contemporaries' eyes their conviction that I was 'old-fashioned,' when I began to perceive that they regarded me as an 'odd' boy. Selwyn of Lichfield had been Bishop of New Zealand, and was held 'Colonial' in manner. Endless stories gathered about him: but they are mostly printed in books. I was sure (in spite of his tiresomely obvious opinion of my oddity) that he was a fine and great man: whether it be a sign of grace or of feebleness, I have indeed, throughout life, been disposed to rate highly those whose judgment I have felt to be adverse to myself.

How as a very young boy I travelled in company with Cardinal Paul Cullen has been said in 'Gracechurch.' Long afterwards in a small country town I was having my hair cut, and the operator said, 'Last gent I was on was a Catholic too. I shaved him.'

'How,' I inquired, 'could you tell by shaving him what his religion was? Do we take the lather differently from Protestants?'

'Not that I've noticed. But he had a shirt-front like yours, sir, only redder. The other gent with him called him "Your Elements."'

A Cardinal in a small Cathedral city? It seemed incredible. But my barber made a queer face and pointed his scissors at the looking-glass. 'That's 'im to the life,' he insisted. And I could not help believing he had shaved the Lord Cardinal Primate of Ireland.

Cardinal Manning told me that once he had to change trains and wait for an hour at Norwich. He went for a stroll, and, a sharp shower falling, he took shelter in a chemist's shop, where an umbrella-less lady, of severe aspect, was also weather-bound. Standing by the glass door, and looking out on the rain-splashed street, His Eminence tried to recall anything particular he knew of Norwich:

'The Man in the Moon'

he recited *sotto voce*, but audibly,

'Came down too soon
And lost his way to Norwich.
The man in the South
Has burnt his mouth
With eating of cold plum-porridge.'

'I hate a fool,' remarked the austere lady.

'I know who she was,' cried I, delighted. 'Didn't you?'

'For all I knew she might have been the wife of the man in the moon.'

'Not she, my Lord; she was Mr. F.'s Aunt.'

'In "Little Dorrit."'

The Cardinal was glorious at rising to a quotation or an allusion.

Once he asked me, 'Well, and what have you been reading this evening?'

'A book called "The Doctor," by Southey.'

'"A book called 'The Doctor,'" forsooth! Have you come to this in it (it's thirty years since I read it): "What an admirable gift in tediousness had Professor Schütz of the University of Vienna, who, in lecturing on the Thirty Years War, began with the Deluge"?'

Once I myself saw the great Prince of the Church contemned, and by another lady (of some four summers). He had driven me to St. Francis's in Pottery Lane, an umbrageous valley of the Notting Hills. There was a Christmas tree, or party, afoot, in the school; and the Cardinal with unspeakable, though silent, groanings essayed to be friendly and urbane. He could talk to children almost as free and easily as Dr. Johnson could talk like a little fish. But when did he flinch from a duty? However, he would, if he could, economise the duty: and pinning one peculiarly small and

defenceless little girl with his eye, he slowly manœuvred her into a corner, and thus opened fire:

'How old,' he asked, twitching and sniffing, 'are you?'

Original as this pointed inquiry was, it failed to impress the lady. She regarded him coldly, ducked, turned away, and remarked, 'You old silly.'

I wished (like Mrs. Markleham and Miss Trotwood between them) that I was a Turk and among my own people too. To have obviously witnessed this defeat was quite horrible. Would the Cardinal ever forgive me? Culprits he could forgive very generously, but I had not offended. I once saw him stumble, and fall down three steps, in the Pro-Cathedral sacristy, and he looked as if I had *pushed* him down.

One night, while on a visit to him, I went to his library for our usual good-night chat, which usually began about nine and lasted an hour. On this occasion I found him a trifle restive and less heartily disposed for friendly talk than was his wont.

'Perhaps you're tired,' I hinted at last.

'The truth is,' he confessed, 'I'm reading "The Woman in White,"' and he produced Wilkie Collins's novel (if novel it can be called) from under his eminent person, where it must have been but an uneasy cushion.

Next morning (we breakfasted alone) I inquired for the lady.

'I confess,' he said, with the nearest approach to a blush I ever saw upon his face, 'that I sat up till I had finished her.'

Then, as if willing to blur the impression, he said, 'Let me see. Has not a little bird told me that *you* have written a novel?'

His air was rather bantering than flattering, and I would dearly have liked to contradict that officious little bird, but could not.

'Yes. Last year, before I left school,' I admitted.

'And it was published?'

'Yes.'

'Produce it.'

In due time, under further pressure, it was produced. The Cardinal read it and did not like it. It was never difficult to perceive what he did not like. And I perceived only too clearly.

'However,' said His Eminence, 'it shows you have a filial command of your Mother Tongue.'

Ruffled at his disapproval of my poor tale, I was rash enough to reject this meed of praise, instead of meekly making what I could of it.

'Does filial *command*,' I asked, 'ensure being long in the land?'

For this pertness I was sent to my bed—in Coventry. To that unpleasant town the Cardinal was much in the habit of relegating me. The first time I was sent there was very soon after my

becoming a Catholic. Fired with emulation of a brother convert who had made a Retreat at Manresa, I posted off to make one at Clapham. And, from some Redemptorist bird, His Eminence heard of my insignificant presence there. I received a telegram, 'When you have done, come and stay here, H.E.C.A.'

I arrived about seven in the evening, and met my eminent host in the white blankness of the hall. He spake no word, but pointed to the dining-room—with an evening paper that crackled disapproval. I am sure he knew that it must increase my discomfiture to be made to slink on in front with a Prince of the Church behind; I did try to make him go first. But he merely pointed on, with eyes that said, 'Obedience is not only courtesy, but all the law and the prophets.'

'Twas a gaunt room: with immense gaunt windows, curtainless and blindless (except for external incrustations of sooty rain dried and hardened on the panes). To sit in it by gaslight was about as intimate and private as it would be to be exposed in a dirty greenhouse at Charing Cross. Sitting at the huge table (furnished with a teapot for the Cardinal, and a partridge for his guest) one was stared out of countenance by the portraits of old Vicars Apostolic, all apparently painted by the same artist, whose ruling principle was abhorrence of flattery.

His Eminence ranged himself behind his newspaper, and proceeded to munch dry toast till one couldn't have heard oneself speak if one had dared to speak. He ate dry toast till I could only think of a boy at school who had but one accomplishment, that of being able to devour seven cracknel biscuits in a row without drinking or finding his natural moisture abated. At last the Cardinal looked over his paper and saw me motionless, steadfastly regarding 'Epus. Gradwell,' as the inscription on his frame announced.

'Why don't you eat your partridges?' His Eminence demanded. There was only one, but he often indulged in this lofty inattention to detail.

'I can't. There are no forks.'

'But there is a bell.'

'I didn't like to get up and disturb your Eminence.'

'Oh, ho! we are meek. One sign of grace, anyway,' quoth the Cardinal, not without glee.

'What have I *done*?' I entreated, piteously, of him.

'Where have you come from?' he asked, in tones which would have been suitable had I been last heard of on a racecourse or addressing the Wesleyan Conference.

'From Clapham.'

'And what were you doing there?'

'Making a Retreat.'

'And who sent you there to make a Retreat?'

'No one. I went of my own accord.'

'And I am your spiritual director' (I really don't believe I had ever realised before that there were four syllables in 'spiritual'), 'and I do not choose to be like this' (and he held the first fingers of his hands opposed to each other till their nails just touched) 'with—others. I have my plans for you. And they are not Clapham.'

I was crushed and cowed, and so visibly that a thaw in his high latitudes set in. Newman (not the Oratorian, but the Cardinal's *gentiluomo* of the Vatican Council) was summoned, and forks arrived. I was able to cut the partridge, and His Eminence gave over cutting me. After quarter of an hour I was sufficiently recovered to inquire if my host remembered Kingsley's poem in eulogy of the North-East wind.

'I remember his Wicked Squire,' he replied, eyeing me with suspicion.

'I like it better,' quoth I; 'I can't see what the North-East wind is for.'

'For correction, I take it.'

Presently he was sure, and laughed.

'Your lamb-like innocence,' said he, 'reminds me of a picture I saw in a loan Exhibition. It was a German-school Madonna: and a German priest was with me. I suppose he meant to say the face was lamb-like in its innocence. But he

said, "Isn't she sheepish-looking?" I was going through another loan Exhibition, at Manchester, and two factory girls were examining an Assumption with Our Lady throned on billowy clouds. I heard one of them say, "I wonder why the lady's painted sitting on the steam."' With my Spiritual Director turned to anecdote I knew the wind had shifted south. I did not have to sleep in Coventry that night.

CHAPTER IV

WHILE these 'Pages' were appearing in *The Month* the writer of them received many letters suggesting that they should be more autobiographical. His reply to that suggestion was and is that there are 'Gracechurch' and 'Fernando,' and that these pages were never intended to be specially autobiographical, but rather slight illustrations of Past and Present.

En passant, may it not be said how strong an illustration of the difference between past and present is afforded by the old Archbishop's House and the new: by the old Pro-Cathedral and the new Cathedral?

Our Lady of Victories in Kensington was, and is, a fine church, and having the episcopal throne it was a Cathedral: but no one could think of it as expressive, if regarded as the Metropolitan Church of Catholic England, as the principal Catholic church in the capital of the British Empire. Both those ideas remained without expression, and are now expressed with a dignity and com-

pleteness that amount to a definition of the position of Catholicity in England.

Even if the waving of a magician's wand could have changed Our Lady of Victories to a fane of quadruple its size, unless the same wand could have transferred it to Westminster, it would never have satisfied the sense of fitness demanding that the Cathedral of Westminster should be in Westminster itself. The old Archbishop's House was in Westminster, and it was a fine house—if it be granted that it was a house at all: which some who lived in it might not have been disposed to grant without reservation. I always understood it was built as a club for non-commissioned officers of the Guards. (If that is my mistake, I shall not be left in it long.) It certainly had the air of a club rather than of a dwelling-house. It had fine rooms, and a very fine entrance-hall. But, it may be said, it had no bedrooms. Out of each corner of a hugely gaunt space at the top certain tiny cubicles had been bitten to serve as sleeping-chambers, with flimsy partition walls. No one who remembers it and him would be inclined to say that the place formed an unfit setting for Cardinal Manning: it was lean and gaunt, white and austere, but it lacked neither dignity nor individuality. It looked cold, but was not. It was not uncomfortable, though it had not the air of admitting that comfort was of any particular

consequence. With all its obvious solidity it gave a temporary impression, as the Headquarters of a Commander-in-Chief in a country he was for conquering without the least purpose of enjoying. It expressed detachment very well, neighbourliness not at all. It was not even neighbour to the Cathedral of the Archbishop who ruled there. From it to his Cathedral was a journey, and he always embodied (disembodied ?) the idea of being on a journey, though he did not travel a great deal. It, his house, did austerely express Cardinal Manning, but it did not roundly express the idea of a Cardinal's Palace—or of anybody's home. And the Cardinal was a great many things besides being austere. He was a flaming enthusiast, and no flame is cold: he could be extremely witty: he was an excellent *raconteur*, with a singular appreciation of the odd and the grotesque, as well as of what was more subtly humorous. He had immense sympathy for sorrow, want, bereavement, and (what is not quite so common in advanced life) for youth, its hopes and longings. Over and over again have I brought to him young and very unimportant people, and never without their receiving a real and kindly welcome at his hands: and, the finest of all compliments, every sign of his interest in them. It did not matter whether they were Catholic or non-Catholic: all that mattered was that they should be without conceit, affectation

or pose. I never found that one of them left him with the impression of his being austere, cold, or aloof. On the other hand, he showed a singular content in being liked. Your really cold person does not care whether he be liked or no, though he may value the appreciation of the important.

I am convinced that he suffered from a belief that he was generally *not* liked, and that what was called his coldness was no more than a defensive armour against the thrusts of proof of unpopularity.

For weeks together I stayed in his house, and almost daily was taken by him to one place or another. But in ordinary society I scarcely ever met him.

Once he called at a great London house, where I was spending the afternoon: and he was surprisingly uninteresting. He could only converse, and no subject-matter for conversation was offered. Tea was offered, and he took it—like medicine, at a gulp, and promptly *saved himself* as the French phrase hits it.

Once he drove me to St. Mary of the Angels in Bayswater, and as we arrived, he said:

'We are going to lunch here.'

When the porter had opened the door, the Cardinal went quickly up the steps, and thence along a sort of cloistral hall, and disappeared with one of the Fathers.

The porter shut me up in a little room by the

door and went away. About three weeks later (as I supposed) the Father Superior put his head in at the door and asked who I was. I confessed and denied not, whereupon my host seemed desirous of accounting for the honour of my presence. I had to tell him that the Cardinal had said we were to lunch there.

'He brings a great many people to lunch,' observed the Father Superior, as though fewer would have served him.

This was Dr. Rawes, who made one think of fine poetry bound in dusty parchment. His spiritual home was, I should say, the Apocalypse: his familiars, the mystic creatures inhabiting there. He lived in poetry as a Cistercian lives in his silence: and his theme was the theme of the Cistercian.

His written poems had a white flame of rapture burning him up to God. They were mostly, not all I think, rhymeless: not blank verse, but of resonant cadence, and with a peculiar use not only of alliteration, but of iteration of words.

Concerning him, one who had been his pupil told me this story. The Doctor was his confessor, and he had been used to make his preparation for confession out of his own head. But on one occasion, finding a prayer-book in his seat in chapel, while waiting his turn to make his confession, he examined himself out of the formula he

found there, and determined to make present use of it.

When he went into the box, at first, while the youthful penitent followed his usual simple method, he was heard with the usual patient tolerance. But when, mindful of the book, he added:

'Since my last confession I have not always been duly submissive to my superiors,' there came from beyond the grille an irrepressible movement of impatience.

'Nor,' and the boy went on, 'have I been invariably affable to my equals.'

'Ugh!' from the Confessor.

'Nor,' added the penitent, completing his formula, 'have I been condescending to my inferiors.'

'You haven't got any!'

On that occasion at St. Mary of the Angels, one of the guests was Prince Lucien Bonaparte, who, for a nephew of Napoleon I., seemed to me wonderfully young. Later on I knew very well indeed, and used often to stay with, a family very intimately connected with the Bonapartes. The head of it, as I have mentioned in my first chapter, Count Clary, was nephew of the two Queens, Julie Clary and Désirée Clary: of whom the former married Napoleon I.'s eldest brother Joseph, and became Queen of Naples, then of Spain. Désirée Clary was engaged to be married to Napoleon I.

himself, but did marry Bernadotte, and so became Queen of Sweden. My old friend remembered her, Queen Julie, and King Joseph very well: he not only remembered Charles XIV. of Sweden, Bernadotte, but was for years his personal aide-de-camp. In Count Clary's château of Palluau, on the Loire, near Tours, there were original portraits of all these great personages of the Napoleonic era, and it seemed a singular link with the past to see him standing under them, and listen to his reminiscences and stories about them. Many of those stories are in print, but some of them may be unknown to my readers.

The Clary family was established at Marseilles, and was both opulent and respected; eschewing politics, and avoiding prominence, it continued during the Revolution period to escape, in general, notice at a time when notice was usually synonymous with danger. But on some occasions it seemed as though, in spite of all their prudence and retired, simple, unostentatious manner of life, the blow was to fall on the Clary household.

François Clary, its head, was a rich silk merchant, and his home was a big, old-world house in the Rue des Phocéens, where quietness, comfort, order and hospitality had long reigned. To have soldiers billeted upon him was very disagreeable to M. Clary as implying not only the presence of unknown strangers, but disturbance of the orderly

routine of home-life. One day, in 1786, a young soldier, a handsome lad of seventeen, came to the house in the Rue des Phocéens armed with a billet on M. Clary, who induced him to go back to his colonel with a note begging that an officer might be sent in his place. This young soldier was Jean Bernadotte who, later on, married François Clary's youngest daughter and made her Queen of Sweden.

In few French cities did the fury of the Revolution blaze more fiercely than at Marseilles; on the tribunal of the Convention sat Maignet, bloodthirsty and implacable. After the death of François Clary, in 1794, it came to be known that, before the Revolution, he had applied for *Lettres de noblesse.* For this crime of the dead father, Etienne Clary, his son, and head of his family, was arrested, sent to prison, and would certainly have been executed but for the presence in Marseilles of the Commissaire Robespierre, younger brother of Maximilien; young Robespierre had influence, and the Clarys had been friendly to him. On their appeal to him he bestirred himself and rescued Etienne Clary from the talons of Maignet.

But, when Maximilien Robespierre had himself been executed, Clary was again arrested, and there seemed now no hope for him. From his 'trial' he would, no doubt, be hurried to instant death. His wife, taking with her her youngest sister-in-law, Désirée Clary, then between thirteen and

fourteen years of age, hurried to the Maison Communale, where she asked to see the Représentant du Peuple, Albitte, slightly known to her family. A crowd of equally unhappy people were waiting in a large outer hall, and there the poor woman and the young girl sat down in a corner till their turn should come. At last, in the late afternoon, Madame Clary was called, and she had to leave Désirée, who had fallen asleep, alone. When Désirée awoke the hall was empty, and it was dusk. Dazed and frightened at finding herself alone, she looked about her in dread. Just then the door of the audience-room opened and a young man came out. Seeing her, he came up and asked her very kindly how she came to be alone, and at so late an hour, in such a place. When she had explained, he gave her the welcome news that her brother had been saved, declaring that she was too young a girl to walk through the streets alone at night, and he must escort her to her home. Désirée was glad enough to take advantage of his kindness, especially as the Rue des Phocéens was a long way off. By the time they reached it, the young man and she were excellent friends.

'You must come,' said she at parting, 'to see my mother. She will wish to thank you for your goodness.'

'So you will introduce me to your family?'

'With pleasure. And meanwhile I should like

to tell them the name of the gentleman who has taken care of me.'

'Well, then, Mademoiselle, you can tell them that my name is Joseph Bonaparte.'

'"And that, my aunt used to say," concluded Count Clary, "was how the Clary and Bonaparte families made acquaintance."'

Joseph Bonaparte called next day. He and his family were then living at Marseilles, and an intimacy quickly ripened between the two families. The Bonapartes were very poor, and when Joseph became engaged to Désirée it was considered a very advantageous connection for the Corsican stranger. Désirée being not yet fourteen, it was proposed that she and Joseph should not marry for two years. Désirée was in no hurry, and, though she liked him very well, was not at all in love with him. Her elder sister Julie, who had not her prettiness or gaiety, but was gentle, very religious, and very shy, really cared for Joseph; but, loving Désirée tenderly, was careful to hide it.

After a while Napoleon came home on leave, and was duly presented by his brother in the Rue des Phocéens, where he found a friendly, hospitable welcome. His shrewd eyes soon saw how things stood between Joseph and the two sisters. He also wanted a rich wife, and one day he told his brother and Désirée that they had not arranged matters wisely.

'In a well-managed household,' he declared, 'there is one who manages and one who yields. You, Joseph, are not the man to decide anything: and Désirée is just like you. If you and she get married, nothing will ever be settled in your house: everything will go by haphazard. Whereas both Julie and I know what we want, and can decide things. So you had much better marry her, and she will manage things for you. As to Désirée, she shall be my wife.'

Joseph gave a most obliging proof of his easiness of character by agreeing to this transfer. He wanted to be married, and he wanted a wealthy wife; as Julie was older than his fiancée he could marry her at once. As for Désirée, she liked Napoleon much better than Joseph, and was in no hurry about marrying anybody. Julie was more content than she felt bound to show at once.

On the very next day Madame Clary and Madame Bonaparte, the high contracting powers, ratified Napoleon's arrangement. Joseph and Julie were to be married at once: Désirée to marry Napoleon as soon as she was sixteen.

The future King and Queen of Spain were accordingly married on August 1, 1794, by the Abbé Raymonet, a friend of the Clarys, secretly in a private chapel: the civil ceremony taking place at Cuges, a small village near Marseilles.

A week later Napoleon was arrested, and all

his papers seized. His friends feared for his life, but the violent expostulations of his comrades of the Army of Italy decided his persecutors to release him after a week's imprisonment. But within a few days he was again in trouble. He had refused to go to La Vendée and take part in the savageries being enacted there by the republican army, and for this he was deprived of all military status. Moody and discouraged, he spent the autumn and the beginning of winter at Marseilles, passing most of his time in the house of his brother and sister-in-law or in that of her mother. With Désirée and Julie he would go for walks in the country, and all his talk was of settling down to farm some small property he would buy there! Désirée made no objection: she never was ambitious, and, not yet knowing Paris, she was content with the idea of a country life near her family.

Later in the winter Napoleon went to Toulon, and gave his services in the suppression of a revolt there. He managed also to save the lives of some *émigrés*, who had been taken on board of a captured Spanish ship, whom the mob desired to murder. But he did not succeed in obtaining reinstatement in his military rank, and, after returning to Marseilles, he went to Paris to demand justice, taking his brother Louis, afterwards King of Holland, with him. His marriage, to Désirée's

great disappointment, was postponed to the end of the year, when he promised to return and carry out the scheme of the purchase of an estate. Meanwhile, Désirée went to live with Julie and Joseph, and her letters to Napoleon bear witness to her sorrow at his absence. He also wrote to her at first kindly and affectionately enough. In June, however, he was not only restored to his rank of General, but obtained important employment, and became at once an influential personage.

His acquaintance with the widowed Vicomtesse de Beauharnais began by her son Eugène coming to General Bonaparte to beg that the sword of his guillotined father might be restored to him. Napoleon at once liked the boy, and that affection continued throughout his life. He called on the mother, and an intimacy immediately began—duly reported to Désirée, who became sulky and complaining. Napoleon never liked either complaints or sulks, and he soon perceived that his engagement was a mistake. He had money of his own now, and did not need a rich wife, and he did not think that a mere child, provincial by taste and breeding, without special capacity, and with no knowledge of the world or society, would suit him. Six months after his parting from her, Napoleon wrote to Joseph, early in September 1795, saying how entirely his feelings had changed, and that the affair must be at an end. Désirée

took it hardly, and clung to the hope that Napoleon would change his mind; but in the following March his marriage with Joséphine de Beauharnais was announced. Two years later Bernadotte proposed to her. 'I scarcely knew him,' she said afterwards, 'though he was intimate with Joseph Bonaparte. . . . I agreed to marry him when they told me he was a man who could resist Napoleon.'

In 1805 Bernadotte was created Prince of Ponte Corvo: in the following year Joseph was made King of Naples, and in 1808 he became King of Spain. In 1810 Bernadotte was offered and accepted the succession to the throne of Sweden, so that Désirée, the daughter of the man who had refused him hospitality twenty-four years earlier, became as his wife Princess Royal of Sweden. By the death of Charles XIII. in 1818 she became Queen.

Does it not seem a strange link with all this romance of history to have had it told by the near relation and intimate friend of all the actors in it except the very greatest?

CHAPTER V

It must not be supposed that Cardinal Manning was always austere to his youthful guest—austerity was the rare exception : in general he was urbane, much better than urbane, kind, friendly, pleasant, sympathetic. Being fifty years younger than His Eminence, nothing endeared him to me more than his habit of apparently forgetting that we were not much about the same age.

Nor did he always talk of solemn and important things—once his theme was hair-brushes, his own, which he had bought with some pride as a schoolboy at Harrow, and had still in use. On that occasion Dr. Johnson, afterwards Bishop of Arindela, was present, and he permitted himself rather a cruel *sotto voce*, murmuring in my ear :

'Their office has been, for some years, of the nature of a sinecure.'

Dr. Johnson's critical remarks were not always delivered in stage whispers. For instance, when the Cardinal would hold some letter or envelope in his hand and express his opinion of the character

of the writer from his handwriting, he would ask rather grimly:

'Do you *know* anything of him, my Lord?'

'My correspondent isn't a "he,"' the Cardinal would remark, 'and I am *not* guilty of rash judgment.'

I asked him if it was rash judgment to feel a mistrustful aversion for a person of whom I knew nothing but his face.

'No,' the Cardinal declared, 'you can't help it. You are taking the only warning available to you in the circumstances. God makes our faces, but we make our own countenances and write our own stuff in them—for guidance.'

Nevertheless he did not encourage a critical habit of mind.

Once we drove together during the Epiphany octave, to visit a church, and afterwards in the carriage, as we drove home, he praised the Crib. I ventured to hint that it was rather a pity the gas-jets lighting it had been so arranged as to cast the shadow of the oxen and asses across the hills of Judæa.

'Why so?'

'Because the cattle had no bodies, only heads and necks stuck on the ends of laths. They look all right from the front, with only the heads and necks jutting out from the side-slips; but the gas threw the shadows of the latter nearly as far as Mount Moriah.'

He laughed, but grimly, and shook his head while thanking God for not having made him hypercritical.

But he was fond of criticising Church music, loathing any that was florid, and having a peculiar animosity against Gounod, who is not precisely florid.

He never failed to detect Gounod, and never failed to show that he had detected him. 'Gounod,' he observed very often, with some profundity, 'has no continuity. He lacks—he lacks continuousness.'

On one of these occasions we passed from Church music at large to Italian Church music in particular, and to things Italian in general.

'Italian,' he said, 'is the weakest language in the world: it is all superlatives.'

I asked him how he liked Italian Saints' lives, as, for instance, those that I described as the 'Black Oratorian Lives of the Saints.'

'Intolerable,' he said; 'insufferable. They are not lives. They are inhuman, and a life is the story of a human being. No one could ever conceive a picture, an idea, of those saints from those "lives" of them. They are mostly divided into chapters, each of which deals with some special virtue of the saint, as "The Gratitude of our Saint."'

'"Such," it will say, "was the singular gratefulness of our saint, that for even the slightest service from the most insignificant person he would invariably express his sense of gratitude, were it at table or

abroad in the city." Which probably means that he said "Thank you" if anyone passed him the salt or told him to take the next turning on the right.'

'I like,' I ventured to confess, 'the chapters which begin thus: "While the servant of God was thus occupied the Enemy of Souls was not idle. His Most Reverend Excellency the Bishop of X. forbade our Saint to preach or give retreats in his diocese."' I could not quite make out whether the Cardinal liked them so well. He sniffed a little, and I hurriedly asked him what he thought of the 'Glories of Mary.'

'It consists,' he replied, 'of Saint Alphonsus and Examples. I like St. Alphonsus's own part: the Examples are sometimes pretty and touching, sometimes silly, and sometimes horrible . . . but the worst thing in Italy is the fleas: and if there were only one in the peninsula it would meet me at the frontier.'

One day we were speaking of Gladstone and Disraeli. He liked the latter, but never alluded to him as 'dear Disraeli': it was always 'dear Gladstone.'

'Dizzy,' said His Eminence, 'was a Jew with a fund of Anglican predilections. He could not abide Nonconformity. (Nonconformists are traditionally Liberals.) He liked the Church of England because it is Established and therefore ornate. He had also strings of affection for the Catholic Church

because it is "the old Religion." He said to me one day, with high glee, in reference to a Bill he was introducing, "It won't touch *us*, nor you: but it will dish the Dissenters."

'I have read,' said I, 'all his novels, but I found it hard. They are too sparkling. The ladies and gentlemen talk like the ladies and gentlemen a ventriloquist holds on his knee. I suppose your Eminence has never had time to read "Lothair" or "Endymion"?'

'Everybody has time to do anything he wants to do. Yes. I have read both of them.' And the Cardinal laughed as if he were remembering being amused. His withers were quite unwrung.

He did not laugh while alluding to 'dear Gladstone's' 'Vaticanism.' But he spoke of it wholly without rancour.

'Lesser minds,' said he, 'got about dear Gladstone in his latter times.'

But he stoutly affirmed him to be a 'man of God,' as he was also insistent on calling the not universally revered Mr. Stead.

I asked him what he thought of General Booth—then only emerging into celebrity. 'I hope, I earnestly hope, he will do more good, far more good, than I think he will.'

This hardly sounds so sympathetic as the Cardinal really was. He thoroughly admired General Booth's aims, and particularly the dragging

of religion out into the slums from its clinging to sanctuary in the churches, and the preaching of 'Faith without fringe.'

Many years after the Cardinal's death I quoted this to a most eminent French ecclesiastic, who thought it splendid.

'Oui! Oui! Voilà ce qu'il faut aux coins des rues—la foi sans galons.'

To a most reverend Italian prelate I also quoted it, but his comment was different:

'Manning! Yes. A most sincere man, and full of zeal. But always a Protestant. No doubt he was in invincible ignorance.'

Certainly a most sincere man, and therefore no one could doubt his entire sincerity when he gave one to understand, as he often did, that his dignity of Archbishop was far more to him than his rank of Cardinal. I do not mean for a moment that he spoke as though he regarded his position as a Prince of the Church otherwise than highly. No one could have regarded that position more highly: to be one of the Electors of the Holy See, one of the official Counsellors of the Sovereign Pontiff, one of the princely heads of the *Clero Romano,* was as much to him as it conceivably could be to any man. And it was everything to him as the final and supreme witness of the Holy Father's trust and confidence in him—the crowning of his conversion.

But he was above all things a priest, and the

pastoral office was what filled his whole thought and heart; and to be an Archbishop was to have the plenitude of the priesthood, the fullest measure of the pastoral office that anyone except the Sovereign Pontiff himself can have.

I do not think that it would have offended him if anyone had addressed a letter to him as Archbishop of Westminster, omitting the 'Cardinal' and his surname; but it plainly annoyed him to receive letters addressed *His Eminence, The Lord Cardinal Manning,* omitting *Archbishop of Westminster.*

He detested the post-cards so beloved by his 'dear Gladstone,' seldom read any that came to him, and never answered any.

Once he threw across the table to me the envelope of a letter that had just arrived. It was incorrectly addressed.

'I do not think,' he said, 'that anyone has a right to write to me who cannot be at the trouble of addressing me correctly. I am not speaking of any poor, unlettered person, who cannot be expected to know such etiquettes. But people of ordinary education *should* know, or else find out.'

'Just as they ought to know how to spell—or look in the dictionary,' I suggested. And this view of it he strongly approved.

'You have exactly hit the point,' he declared. 'It is consistent with perfect morality to spell

Grace with an *s*: but the man who did it would label himself.'

When I went to his room for our good-night chat I often found him reading the Bible.

'As I grow older,' he said, 'I find it more and more difficult to find any other spiritual reading to my taste. One falls back more and more on the words of God: the words of men satisfy less and less. Here there are no idiosyncrasies—simply the Holy Ghost.'

He was reading the Douai version, and he praised me for saying that its inferiority to the 'Authorised Version,' from the mere point of view of beauty, seemed to me much exaggerated, and was chiefly due to habitude and custom on the part of the reader.

'Most of those who abuse the Douai Version,' I suggested, 'have become so wedded to the Authorised Version by old use and custom that they could not suffer *any* other translation, and so they fall tooth and nail on the English of the Douai, which is not always inferior. It seems to me that "because man shall go into the house of his eternity" is *more* beautiful and poignant than "because man goeth to his long home."'

'So it does to me. I cannot say that "Esau roared out with a great cry" is more beautiful than "Esau cried out with a great and exceeding bitter cry," but I suspect it is more characteristic of Esau. He was just the sort of rough hunting man of the

woods who would roar in his rage and bitterness. But some of our converts can never leave Oxford behind when they set out on the *iter Romanum.*'

The Cardinal would talk, and talk intimately, of almost anything, but he never talked of his own Anglican days; and I have heard Mr. George Russell say that he never succeeded in luring His Eminence to that theme.

One night he asked me what I had been reading.

'A book of yours.'

'What book?'

'Some sermons of yours. I bought them to-day on a bookstall.'

'Go and fetch them.'

I did; and, as soon as he saw they were sermons preached by himself as Archdeacon of Chichester, he took them to a cupboard that he kept locked (the same cupboard in which he had interned my juvenile novel) and shut them up there.

'I will make an exchange,' he said, coming back and putting in my hands his 'Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost.' To the Archidiaconal Sermons he made no allusion whatever.

To Mrs. Manning, it need hardly be said, he never alluded; but he once mentioned Bishop Wilberforce, who married her sister—not recalling that circumstance, however, but saying with some glee that as a small child Wilberforce, the son of most virtuous parents, had given great scandal to his nurse by

describing their wedding, of which he professed to retain a lively recollection.

In giving Confirmation in his private chapel the Cardinal always wore a very beautiful and very sumptuous cope, presented (I think) by Louis Philippe to Cardinal Wiseman. It was, however, a Gothic vestment, and Cardinal Manning did not love Gothic vestments.

'I should like,' I told him one morning at breakfast, 'to see Your Eminence wear that cope at the Pro-Cathedral.'

'I dare say you would,' he said, peering over the top of *The Times* with a mischievous gleam in his eye.

'I believe,' I declared, with sudden inspiration, 'that you are *wearing it out* in private.'

He laughed, and neither pleaded the impeachment nor protested against it.

Some of his *mots* were severe enough, though delivered with the extreme of apparent innocence.

Once he brought a very magnificent bishop, who by no means despised ornament, to see St. Thomas's Seminary.

'It is very plain,' remarked his Lordship, scanning the rather austere façade.

'You are quite right,' rejoined the Cardinal most sweetly. 'Quite. There is nothing vulgar about it.'

On another occasion the same prelate was a

fellow-guest, with the Cardinal, of royalty. The Bishop came in purple; the Cardinal presently arrived in his ordinary black coat, breeches, gaiters, and apron; to whom the Bishop rushed up, much perturbed at thus eclipsing in splendour a Prince of the Church.

'Never mind, my dear Lord,' said the Cardinal. 'It does not matter. I dare say no one will notice you.'

For the then Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII., Cardinal Manning had a peculiar feeling of affection. The Prince was always charming in his manner to him, gentle, reverent, and filial.

At our peculiar composite meal—his tea, my dinner—the Cardinal said one evening, 'I was talking to the Prince of Wales to-day. He said, "You will not approve of me to-day I have been doing something you would not approve of. Shall I tell you what it was?" "I can guess," I told him. He had been voting in the House of Lords in favour of the Bill to legalise marriage with a deceased wife's sister. I told him I knew what he had been doing, and did not approve of *that*. He was quite meek, like a nice boy who had been scolded a little.'

Some converts he found very trying. Of one he said to me, 'She always makes me regret Jacob's Ladder. If it had not been taken up into heaven again she might have got there that way, instead

of elbowing us all on her way up *viâ* the Catholic Church.'

He was very fond of Dr. Rawes, Superior of the Oblates of St. Charles, of whom I have spoken on an earlier page.

'Dr. Rawes always praises me,' he would say, 'and we all like being praised. He says, "I like you because you don't mind being abused. People say you are all fads and fancies, and you go on just the same. That's the proper thing. Some people change their ways when they hear folk say they are fools."'

But, highly as the Cardinal thought of Dr. Rawes, he did not specially enjoy having him as Assistant Priest at the throne. For he had his own way of doing things. Sometimes he would put on the Cardinal's mitre back to front, so that the lappets hung down over His Eminence's face. Sometimes, when it would not readily open, he tried *cracking it open* on the Cardinal's skull; and he was apt to say, having got it on right:

'Now it's on, you'd better keep it on. For I don't know how to take it off.'

CHAPTER VI

THESE 'Pages' were not primarily intended by the writer to consist of Reminiscences of people of consequence, but as illustrations of such differences between the world as he first knew it and the world of to-day, as might strike a quite ordinary sexagenarian.

Let me recall some of those differences, not in the spirit of a bigoted *laudator temporis acti*, but simply as an observer not determined to be *damnator* of the day that is—a harsh and ungracious part: for why should we preach down the young, who never loved being preached down in our own lost youth?

It is often remarked how much more is done for children nowadays than was done when the present writer was a child. Is it contended that our parents were more selfish, and cared less for us, or for our happiness? Perhaps they were less confused between the ideas of happiness and pleasure, and less concerned to provide for us a constant condition of being entertained; and possibly the pleasures

to which we were invited were simpler, and would strike the present-day children as themselves dull.

Certainly our amusements were less costly: I can answer for it that in our own family we were taught, and thoroughly grasped, the principle that nothing mattered so little as money; and that if we could not enjoy ourselves without spending it we must be stupid indeed. We undoubtedly did enjoy ourselves, and it is certain we did so without money to spend. Treats which cost money were few and very far between; but we did not wait for them to be happy and amused, and the intervals between them were never dull. To have announced ourselves dull or bored would have been branded as a confession of stupidity.

As it happened, our only living parent was immensely clever. It may be the case that where children are allowed to think no enjoyment possible without expense, it is not they who are stupid but their parents. The dullest dog can buy tickets and have his children carted from one 'show' to another.

In one respect I think the children of nowadays are less lucky than we were: they have not as good magazines, nor have they authors of the same calibre writing for them.

To cite one magazine only—what have the children of to-day to compare with *Aunt Judy*? and, for that matter, what books to compare with

'Lilian's Golden Hours,' Ballantyne's books for boys, 'Alice in Wonderland,' or 'Alice through the Looking Glass'? There are no looking-glasses now, they are all 'mirrors,' and I suspect there is no Wonderland. Hans Andersen has no successors, his fairies are dead *sine prole.*

If the children of to-day *had* a Mrs. Gatty, would they read her exquisite 'Parables from Nature'? Would her daughter's 'Jackanapes,' 'Lob Lie by the Fire,' 'Jan of the Windmill,' and 'Story of a Short Life,' if written to-day, receive a welcome such as they received by the children for whom they were written?

What would the children of to-day make of 'Peter Parley,' of 'The Children of the New Forest,' of 'The Rose and the Ring,' of 'What the Moon Saw'?

I am sure juvenile life was less expensive, and that children were given fewer object-lessons in the appreciation of wealth.

All life was less costly. There was less spending out of doors; and though home-life was less expensive, there was more of it, and it was not regarded as a tedious necessary interval between instalments of the real life away from home. On the contrary, it was more plainly recognised that *happiness* depended on the quality of the home-life—the quality, not the costliness.

It seems to me that life in general was, in

consequence, easier, less anxious, less preoccupied. Certainly there was very little disposition to bow down to wealth; the attitude was, if anything, hypercritical towards the mere possessor of money-bags, and it was rather more likely he would be set down as, of course, vulgar, than that he should be blindly adored, his *laches* adopted as new standards, and his intimacy counted as the best of blessings.

I remember once hearing a witty scion of an ancient house exclaim with genuine conviction, 'It is easy to see what the Almighty thinks of huge wealth by observing what sort of people He makes millionaires.'

Nor was that mere sour grapes, for the maker of this *mot* was by no means poverty-stricken. He was, in fact, rich; but his riches were not *him*, or any integral part of him. His importance did not depend on what he had, but on what, and who, he was.

The modern cult of the millionaire is not, after all, to be counted to *him* for unrighteousness. It must, and often does, disgust him. The fault lies with his worshippers, who can only see yellow, and whose adoration itself consists mostly in a fervent appetite to be fed and drunk by him, treated by him, tipped by him. It is not always the millionaire who batters at the gates of 'Society,' piteous to get in, but Society that peers over its wall (like

the lunatic in *Punch* regarding the angler), calling out 'Come inside.'

The difference between classes—I do not mean between wealth and poverty—was more marked in the far-away days of my youth; too much insisted upon, very likely. But it had one good result—it was more clearly recognised, as an axiom of social common sense, that the expenditure of one class could not, without folly, be copied by another. A plain gentleman's wife did not lose caste because she could not, and did not, dress like a peer's wife. Her husband did not aim at the same pleasures as the man of large means. The word 'gentleman' itself meant more; it was not ill-bred to refuse conceding it to every male human being. A railway porter did not say 'I can't put your things into the train myself, madam, as I go off duty, but *that* gentleman will.' (So that the lady has to tip two 'gentlemen' instead of one.)

In the last year of the war I had to remunerate a couple of men for the most useful labour of cleaning out a cesspool. Inquiring their charge, I was told, 'Same as the hother gentlemen what did it before they was called hup.'

In the days of my youth, even shop-assistants used not commonly to allude to each other, to customers, as gentlemen. A lady, whom I knew as a lad, had been making purchases at a large and well-known establishment pretty close to Victoria

Station. On getting home she found one article omitted from her parcel, and at once went back.

'At that counter,' she explained to the shop-walker, 'I bought a veil, and it was not put in with the other things.'

'Was it,' inquired the shop-walker, 'a fair young gentleman, with curls, that served you, Ma'am?' (He would condescend no lower than 'Madam' now.)

'No,' said the lady, 'it was an elderly nobleman, rather bald if anything.'

Such a repartee would be held at least captious nowadays, if not itself ill-bred. 'Gentleman' merely means fellow-creature in trousers, like 'Esquire.'

Lords and Members of Parliament were much bigger people when I was a child. We touchingly assumed that peers were nobles of ancient lineage, and that M.P.'s were representative men of consequence. I do not believe we ever dreamt of peerages having a market-value, the payment of which would enable anyone desirous of the luxury to purchase it. If a new peer were created, it was not necessary for the newspapers to explain who he was; people knew already.

Members of Parliament, I must say, whatever their politics, were apt to represent one class, and would have been a good deal surprised to be told they deserved wages for their services, though a Minister's large pay for his services seemed to be in

the nature of things, and demanded much less explanation than an eclipse or a rainbow.

In 'Gracechurch' I have described the almost regal honours accorded to a youthful nobleman visiting an outlying estate of his, with his wife, upon his marriage. I am sure that reception, those presentations, struck nobody then as comic, not even his lordship, who was not deficient in humour. Bored by it all he may have been, elated or shocked he certainly was not.

As a youth and young man I knew very well a certain Duchess, herself most humble in spirituals; but it never struck her as haughty to make, as she would almost daily do during the London season, a round of 'visits' without once leaving her carriage, or so much as asking whether the ladies at whose doors she dropped cards were at home. It certainly would never have occurred to her that those ladies, if within, and observing her carriage drive away from their doors, without her having made the slightest show of a desire to see them, could be offended, or accuse her of impertinence.

That sort of 'calling' reminds me of a story of Bishop Lonsdale of Lichfield, whom I have already mentioned as a friend of my English grandfather. He never lived in the Palace at Lichfield, but at Eccleshall Castle; and when he drove to his Cathedral City had commonly more to do than time to do it in. His manners were gruff and bluff, and social

duties, if they did not press very heavily on him, were apt at all events to be irksome.

One afternoon he called upon a lady of light and leading living in the Close.

'Is Mrs. ——— at home?' he inquired when the door was opened.

'Yes, my lord.'

'Hm! Then,' after the briefest pause of consideration, 'I'll call another day.'

Lady Dorothy Nevill, in her Reminiscences, deplores the decay of *conversation* since the days of her youth and middle age. She does not remark on the introduction of a new topic—insides and operations. Lady Dorothy was born thirty-two years before me, but even in *my* youth young men and maidens did not regale each other in public with descriptions of the removal of various portions of their *individu*, what led to it, what resulted from it, what the doctor said and did, what the nurses were like, and what the nursing-home cost. An operation was never alluded to in public—least of all over a dinner table; and certain diseases, not criminal by any means, were never mentioned. An allusion to cancer by name would have produced almost as portentous a silence as if the culprit had spoken by name of God or Death.

Not long ago I was dining in a brilliant circle where, for quite a long time, the conversation (*sic*) consisted of a frank and exhaustive comparing of

notes as to the temperature, depth, duration, etc., of each conversationalist's bath. Certainly that which the poverty of the English language obliges me to call our talk has lost the reproach of stiffness.

Very recently a young lady, who was my neighbour at dinner, complained to her other neighbour that strawberries and cream made her sick.

'Really sick?' he inquired with true sympathy.

'Yes, *up*,' was the brief but sufficient reply.

Health, or rather disease, is a main prop of contemporary 'conversation.' Perhaps it came in with microbes.

Doubtless my readers remember Lady Dorothy Nevill's delightful story of the Vicar's wife who insisted to the Sextoness, who was cleaning the church, on the necessity of open windows, 'or we shall have those horrid microbes coming.'

'And aren't they communicants?' inquired the Sextoness, at a loss to understand the ecclesiastical lady's obvious desire for their exclusion from church privileges.

Here is another microbe story. A certain great lady of my acquaintance had just arrived from London at her husband's Scottish country home, and she made haste to visit the gardens.

'Donald,' said she, encountering a gardener, 'I hope you have kept well all the winter and spring.'

'Na sae weel, me leddy. Na that weel! Whiles

I think we nane of us has our healths the same since they McCrawbies came in.'

Lady Dorothy's tale of the two Miss Walpoles, her nonagenarian kinswomen, reminds me of one almost precisely similar as to circumstances. *Her* story is that when Miss Fanny, who had kept her room all day through indisposition, came down in the evening to the drawing-room, her sister called out, 'Fanny, I'm going to be ill too. It must be apoplexy; I feel so hot about the head.' 'Nothing of the sort, Charlotte,' cried Miss Fanny, making a dash at her sister's head; 'your cap's on fire, and I'm going to put it out.'

The pendant is a convent story. A certain nun, very holy, and very humble, one evening in choir, in the dusk, the gas not being turned up though lighted, became conscious of a light and warmth near *her* head, and thought it a supernatural manifestation beyond her poor meritings. 'Too much!' she murmured. 'Too much for *me*.'

'A great deal too much, Sister, for you or any of us,' declared the nun in the next stall; 'you've got your veil in the gas-jet.'

Lady Dorothy mentions, as a survival in her young days, the quaint play of *St. George and the Dragon*, enacted at Christmas by the mummers. But I saw it performed, the Christmas before the war, in the great hall at Hurstbourne, and it was no *re*vival, suggested by Lord Portsmouth, but a

*sur*vival, having been annually enacted from time immemorial by the village mummers. Whether it has been revived now the war is over I do not know. The costumes were quaint (and, from the point of view of fire, very dangerous), the dialogue more quaint still: how far traditional I could not guess; but the introduction of 'topical' stanzas did not tend to conviction as to the general antiquity of the speeches and songs.

Lady Dorothy has a funny story, that had better be read in her pages, apropos of Abraham Hayward's fondness for employing French expressions—which, knowing little French, he did with occasionally disastrous incorrectness. Many people have the same foible as to other foreign tongues. When I first became a Military Chaplain, I was lunching with a militia regiment, whose colonel was a City magnate. For something to say, I asked where their depôt was. 'Militia regiments,' said my host, 'have no depôts. It is much to be regretted. A depôt would give us a *locum tenens* in the county.'

Considering our John Bullishness, I often wonder at our choosing to employ French, or even pseudo-French, expressions for things and occasions of ordinary use, or frequent occurrence. Thus we talk of our *chauffeur*, which no French person ever does, except in the sense of a stoker. We cry *Encore* at the end of a song at the risk of hearing it again,

and in newspapers a writer's pseudonym is called his *nom-de-plume.* I do not much like 'pen-name,' but it is English, and *nom-de-plume* is neither English nor French. The respectable English word 'Dowager' is immensely revered. In a neighbourhood where a certain Dowager Duchess lived, and where certainly duchesses were rarer than dowagers, I remember that she was invariably spoken of as 'the Dowager,' never as 'the Duchess.' One of my Irish grandfather's nearest neighbours was an untitled widow, whose son, the reigning squire, presently married. Apparently Mrs. L., senior, decreed that henceforth she was to be known as 'the Dowager' *tout court.* One of my aunts went to S. Castle to make a wedding-call.

'Is Mrs. L. at home?' she asked.

'She is not, my lady,' said the footman; 'but the Badger's in.'

Jane Austen tells us that no self-respecting young lady can refrain from altering her name as far as possible (not by the usual process of change merely). There was a family called Bethune, pronounced, as we all know, 'Beaton'; but the young ladies of one branch of that ancient house conceived that 'Bĕthoon' would sound finer. On being announced by the puzzled footman of a neighbouring laird, the result was as follows:

'General Beaton and Mrs. Beaton, and the Miss Buffoons.'

I think the following shows a great genius for economy of labour in the servant concerned. Polish surnames, it is well known, have a masculine and a feminine termination, thus: Prince Sobieski, Princess Clémentine Sobieska, Queen of James III. My great friend, Comtesse Clary, was sitting in her drawing-room in Paris, and, the door flung widely open, her butler announced, as a lady and gentleman entered, 'M. le Prince Ski, Madame la Princesse Ska—tous les deux Orloff.'

Lady Northesk, mother of the late Earl, was in Paris, and went to visit a French friend. The servant demanded her name. 'Comtesse de Northesk,' she answered. 'De Norvège?' queried the footman. Thinking it useless to bother about the correct pronunciation, she smiled and nodded, and the man preceded her, murmuring thoughtfully to himself 'Norvège'; at the door, however, he summed up his ruminations by the announcement:

'Sa Majesté la Reine de Norvège, qui s'appelle seulement Comtesse, en voyage.'

To revert to ecclesiastical anecdotes. When I first lived at Plymouth, Bishop Vaughan was still alive, and Bishop Graham was only coadjutor. The elder prelate, however, was annually convinced that that year would be his last on earth. On New Year's Eve he would gather round his table the local clergy, and, after hospitably entertaining them,

would reply to the toast of his health in a speech full of pathetic allusion to the probability of its being the last such occasion on which they would all be together. This had occurred pretty often. More than once I had myself been touched by the old Bishop's intimations of mortality. On the last occasion of my being present, he said :

'Next year on this night you will still be here. Where shall I be ? I shall not hear or know what you are saying. . . .'

'I expect you'll *worm it out,*' quoth his coadjutor, not quite *sotto voce.*

Bishop Graham's wit was not always so *macabre,* but it was often of an acrid pungency. A priest from Cornwall came to luncheon at Bishop's House ; he had had a long and very severe attack of influenza, and had been dilating at large on his symptoms and his sufferings. At last, with a modest smile, he remarked that, ill as he had been, he had carried out the restoration of his church.

'Yes,' jerked in Bishop Graham, 'you told us just now how you had lost your *taste.*'

These specimens of the Bishop's rather drastic humour would hardly give those who never knew him a just idea of him, for he had a very kind and tender heart, and was full of sympathy for sorrow or misfortune. It is hard too, in a written version, to give correctly the peculiar dry tone of his shrewd wit. As his name was Graham, 'pawkiness'

may not be a bad description of some of its manifestations.

He had not much admiration for new ways and schemes. Not so many years ago a very fine, but very novel, plan was reported to him, which involved the energetic locomotion of a number of priests on 'special service.' 'It's wonderful,' he remarked mildly, 'what a number of clergy there seem to be nowadays *with nothing to do*: in Lent, too!'

Of another scheme, which also in his view implied an excess of leisure somewhere, he observed dispassionately, after criticism rather direct than eulogistic:

'However, they're good people, and no doubt Our Lord will bring some good out of it all, *where they least intend it.*'

The somewhat acrid dryness of his speech and manner hardly prepared me for the following. Someone, at table, had been complaining that certain of the poor-school children were rather naughty in church.

'What do they do?' the Bishop demanded sharply enough.

'Play, my lord.'

'Well, and where should they play, poor little things, if not in their Father's house?'

Behind his figure—it was homely enough—it seemed to me, at hearing of those words of his, there loomed Another—younger, eternal, of the most

beautiful of the children of men, insisting on the children's right to interrupt, with their play about His knees, Divine Wisdom itself.

To myself, personally, I should like to say that Bishop Graham was, during long years, invariably kind and cordial, though I am sure I was never at all *in his line*, and probably less so than ever when I took to writing novels. That kindness and cordiality he left as an heirloom to his successor; but of the living I do not wish to speak here. I will only say this, not personal to him: perhaps as an inheritance from Protestant days, I had always, till the Norwich Congress of 1912, a dread of bishops, whom I regarded as set for the terror of them that do well, the extinction of such as did less well. But on the way to Norwich I travelled (most grudgingly and of necessity) with a bishop I had last known, years before, as a parish clergyman, who, I thought, had vigorously disliked me; who must, having become a bishop, dislike me now much more. Well, he treated me like an old school-fellow (which I wasn't), and insisted, in a very crowded railway carriage, on being the table for my belated luncheon-basket, and the Ganymede of my (very nasty) half-bottle of claret (*sic*). My piratical incursions into the Main of fiction he spoke of as a 'Catholic asset' and 'a service to Catholicity everywhere,' and, in a word, turned my ideas of bishops upside down.

Next day, before mounting the stage on which I had to read a paper on literature, I found myself in a room into which nearly all the bishops were crowded. That I, who had been preaching without book for thirty years, was terrified at having to read from a prepared MS. was so obvious that one and all they came and comforted me, kindly, flatteringly.

'"San Celestino," eh? Spiritual reading, eh?' whispered the great Bishop Hedley, as great a man of letters as any Catholic England has produced during the post-reformation period.

'You really frightened? I'm more edified than by all your books,' said another, with inimitable friendliness.

They were *all* more than kind, gentle, encouraging; still I was terrified, and it only made them the more kindly.

When all was finished, and the paper stammeringly read, the Cardinal himself turned to me, and spoke such words of generous praise as have heartened me in every attempt I have made to write anything since; which I can only write in my own way, on lines of my own, with my own purpose and my own conception of what my obligation, not only to Catholic usefulness, but to letters, involves.

CHAPTER VII

HAVING lived throughout childhood and boyhood in the far depths of the country, with very infrequent visits to London, I had, till I was grown up, or nearly grown up, seen very few of my famous contemporaries.

I was quite grown up when I first saw Queen Victoria—and she frightened me. As a boy I had seen Disraeli, who had the goodness to look exactly like his portraits, and almost like his caricatures—if the cartoons of him in *Punch* could be so called. It was in the House of Commons, and he said something—it took about fifty seconds, I think, and I don't in the least remember what it was; but I was congratulated on being able to say I had 'heard Dizzy'; and I say so now. Within a few months he had made the Queen Empress of India, and himself Earl of Beaconsfield. Of course, I was always hearing about him, for almost all my friends were old-fashioned Tories, whose noses existed for him to drag them about by; and they suffered it, but not always gladly.

Of Gladstone I chiefly heard as a sink of iniquity, with a ghoulish appetite for devouring churches: it came rather as a surprise when I discovered that he was a very strong Churchman, quite High, indeed, for those days. That Disraeli, on the other hand, was not High Church, did not surprise me, as he was the Autocrat of All the Tories; and in those far-away times the Tory inhabitants of country houses were scarcely ever High Church—to be so was considered rather middle-class: as in Irish country houses I was always assured it was vulgar to be Catholic.

Gladstone I saw twice: once on his legs in the House of Commons, and another time in the Lobby of the House. He was then very old, and was less like the cartoons, and (excuse me) I thought he looked grumpy.

I ventured to say so to Cardinal Manning, who declared:

'You are capable of saying the Archangel Gabriel looked grumpy.'

'That would depend on how he did look,' I hinted.

When 'Lothair' appeared I read it greedily, and liked it. So, long afterwards, with 'Endymion.' The other day I read both again, and found them very hard-going, especially 'Lothair.'

It does not seem to me that Cardinal Grandison is at all a good portrait of Cardinal Manning, even

superficially: as a character-portrait it is nothing. Nor is Lothair like Lord Bute. As for the Duchess and her daughters, they are like nobody who ever existed out of a waxwork show. I have read all Disraeli's novels, as a literary duty; but have always found them difficult, and doubt if anybody but the antiquarian will continue to read them long. I can imagine the student of *mœurs d'autrefois* reading them in a future age; but, if he imagines that in them he finds the life of the Victorian age, he will be cheated. There is *no* life in them: they are marionette-shows, and you see the strings and the hand pulling the strings all the time. There is no individual movement, only applied motion from the hand that pulls; there is no expression, and the talk is sheer ventriloquism, all out of one mouth. The costumes are, indeed, sumptuous; and on the scenery no expense has been spared.

These novels are usually praised for their brilliance, but brilliance in literature does not mean precisely glitter and dazzle. They are called amusing, but they have no humour. A cold, thin-lipped wit, ruthlessly sparkling, they often have; but humour never keeps where pathos is a stranger, and pathos knew better than to come near Disraeli.

Two men of genius drew full-length portraits of the same horrible 'nobleman.' Both are re-

pulsive; but Thackeray's Marquess of Steyne convinces (though occasionally, it must be admitted, he is 'steep'). Disraeli's Lord Monmouth is as coldly loathsome; but he is not real, one is unconvinced, and even unable to remember the picture, while recalling the label on it. That is the fate of all portraits that fail: those which give the character intended to be represented one never forgets, though they have no label beyond 'A Burgomaster's Mother,' or 'The Blue Boy.'

Who can ever forget the Marquess of Steyne? Who could ever remember Cardinal Grandison that had not known Cardinal Manning, and did not recall the real man while trying to recall the pseudo-portrait?

We used to be told that Gladstone could not stomach his great rival's novels; and I, for one, cannot blame him. It must be said that as political tracts they are indeed sparkling; but one must have a peculiar thirst to swallow stale politics, even if distilled into a foaming draught.

Anthony Trollope died the year after Lord Beaconsfield; and he also wrote political novels, which anyone who likes literature can read to-day with delight—because the life he paints is real life, and his men and women, even though they be politicians, are really people. From my mother, who knew him, I used to hear much of him; and to admire his books was a family tradition. But

such traditions will not compel the adult taste; and my fervent love of Trollope was a later and independent growth. After his death he fell into an occultation even more dismal than that which overtook George Eliot. People mostly took it quite amiss you should read him, and even those who would still read and like him did it with an apology. The apology is really due from those who imagine themselves readers of English literature, and declare that they cannot read him. A novelist who has written some seventy books may probably have written too many; but none of the seventy is unreadable, and by far the greater number are immensely worth reading. Even Trollope's most courageous apologists are apt to confess (I think timorously) that to quite the highest genius he had no claim. But to whom do they concede it? To Shakespeare, no doubt. To Jane Austen, in her own secure and rivalless corner, no doubt. To Thackeray and Dickens, no doubt. But, if Trollope's best is not equal to the best of Dickens and Thackeray, their worst is quite equal in inferiority to his worst.

Trollope is faulty in parts, even of his better work. Was not Miss Edgeworth? Was not Fanny Burney? Was not Sir Walter?

Miss Edgeworth is only at her best in two books; Miss Burney at her best in only one. Sir Walter at his glorious best in perhaps six. Trollope is at his best in quite a dozen.

John Galt was at his very best in only one book; though his second best was very good, and he reached it in three. But his worst was, plainly, very poor; and, besides, he need not come into comparison, because he is as undeservedly neglected as Trollope, and I have never heard him put forward as a claimant for the highest genius. It is customary even, I think, among those who do admire Trollope, to admit that, outside the Barchester series of novels, he did nothing first-rate: this concession is entirely unjust to him. The first of that series, 'The Warden,' is not so good as 'The Small House at Allington,' which is the fifth; and Anthony Trollope wrote many books at least equal to 'The Small House at Allington': 'Can You Forgive Her?', 'The Prime Minister,' 'Phineas Finn,' 'Phineas Redux,' 'The Eustace Diamonds,' 'Orley Farm,' and 'Is He Popenjoy?' are all better than it. 'Castle Richmond' and 'The Macdermots of Ballycloran' are certainly as good as 'The Warden,' though they are Irish tales, and Trollope was not an Irishman.

If anyone had the energy to tabulate the *dramatis personæ* of all Dickens, and would do as much by Trollope, I believe that it would be found that the latter has left us as many really excellent characters as the former. In one respect the Trollope list would even have the advantage; and that respect by no means of low importance—truth to nature and probability. Dickens wallows in

villains, Trollope loves a rogue; but Trollope's rogues are undeniable, human, and genuine; Dickens's villains are not merely 'steep,' but often monstrous. Has Dickens anywhere drawn two such rogues as the Mollets, *père et fils*, so essential to the plot, so true to life, and so convincing? In all his seventy novels, has Trollope ever condescended to a Monk, a Ralph Nickleby, or a Quilp?—of whom it may be said, by the way, that the first-named villain is unutterably dull and tedious, and the last-named has no more human semblance than a turnip lantern.

Trollope probably thought Johnny Eames was a gentleman, and Dickens no doubt imagined that Pip was one. Both authors were mistaken, but one does not want to kick Eames. Trollope occasionally introduces a character who fails to interest, but he never introduces one of whom one inwardly protests, as Mrs. Prig did aloud of Mrs. Harris, 'I don't believe there's no sich a person.' Trollope never gives us a rocking-horse like Sir Leicester Dedlock. And where, oh where, does Dickens give us heroines like Mary Thorne, Lily Dale, Grace Crawley, or Alice Vavasor? Dickens has no women to touch Lady Glencora Palliser, Kate Vavasor, Fanny Robartes, or Eleanor Bold. Nor has Thackeray any heroine worth Mary Thorne's little finger, not even Ethel Newcome.

Dickens in Lady Dedlock, and Trollope in Lady

Mason, each described a woman long established in respectability and weighted with a terrible secret. Let anyone read and compare the history of those two ladies, and see if he can fail to recognise the superiority of Trollope's conception and presentation.

It is not for a moment pretended that Trollope could do all that Dickens could do. In burlesque and grotesque no one has ever been able to do what Dickens has done: no one has ever come near him in rollicking fun. But there are other methods of humour, and in them Trollope has done much that Dickens could not have done so well. What a mess would he have made of Mrs. Proudie! In his hands she would never have lived, and when the time to kill her arrived, he could never have done it as Trollope did. After loathing the woman through half a dozen books, we pity her in her end, not merely becauses she ceases to breathe, but because she quits a stage where none regrets her: lonely in the isolation she has made for herself, shamed, outcast even from the heart of the husband she had made despicable while sincerely endeavouring to make him of more repute and consequence.

In the previous chapter I said that we who are sexagenarians were luckier as children than the children of to-day, in that we had better books written for us, and better magazines edited for us.

Of course all books that *are* books, once

written, are the property of all subsequent time. But to have been alive while the great authors of them were giving them to the world does seem to have given us a sort of personal share in them which a later generation cannot feel. Only five of Dickens's books appeared during my life, but four of them were among his very best: 'Our Mutual Friend,' 'Great Expectations,' 'A Tale of Two Cities,' and 'Edwin Drood.'

Only three of Thackeray's works were published after my birth, but one of the three was 'The Virginians,' which was only surpassed by 'Vanity Fair,' and is not in some respects surpassed even by 'Vanity Fair.' Thackeray himself could not create two Becky Sharps, but (that *minus* apart) the characters in 'The Virginians' are equal to those in the more famous book, and the interest of the narrative is, perhaps, superior. It is certainly finer than 'Esmond' and 'Pendennis'; the part of hero is put in commission, and the twin brothers make a better hero than 'Pen,' whom some of us admire considerably less than did Thackeray. Personally, I put 'The Virginians' above 'The Newcomes,' with all reverent admiration for the Colonel, who is Major Dobbin promoted.

I was alive when George Eliot gave 'Adam Bede' to the world, and then came 'The Mill on the Floss,' 'Silas Marner,' 'Romola,' 'Felix Holt,' 'Middlemarch,' and 'Daniel Deronda.' The first

half of 'The Mill on the Floss' I rank far above 'Adam Bede,' and have certainly read it over thirty times. As a piece of literature I would put 'Silas Marner' next. 'Felix Holt' has never been sufficiently appreciated, and it is immeasurably above 'Romola' or 'Daniel Deronda.' Whether they be right who declare that 'Middlemarch' is this great woman's greatest work I will not pretend to decide, but it is at all events of high excellence, and as easy to read now as when it appeared over fifty years ago.

That George Eliot was an Agnostic all the world believed that it knew, and that considerable portion of the world that is by no means Agnostic proceeded to read agnostic teaching (*sic*) into her novels. For my part I can never see it: on the contrary, I am rootedly convinced that if no one had ever known by whom those books were written, no one would ever have discovered them to be the work of an Agnostic. The outlook on life may be melancholy—though much less melancholy than Charlotte Brontë's, who was a morbidly pious Evangelical—but it is not pessimistic. That George Eliot's Christians are often innocently pagan, is only a proof that she could regard 'Christian England' out of very clear eyes, and was much better aware than many Christians of what Christianity really is. Towards religion she is never disrespectful, nor flippant, nor coldly

unsympathetic. She describes many religious persons, many varying manifestations of religion; and always with a singularly sympathetic appreciation of all that is genuine, always with a large allowance for imperfection and inconsistency, with a poignant, touching reverence for what is simple, ignorant, unlettered, but lightwards groping. No one accuses Dickens of Agnosticism because of his Shepherds and Chadbands, or because of his grimly repulsive Mrs. Clennam. George Eliot has no hypocrite parsons, or hypocrite devotees. She describes many parsons, and several of them have their faults—a misfortune not confined to ministers of religion—but they are none of them bad, or insincere; nothing could be farther from her purpose than to teach 'These are religious representative men, see what religion does for them.' Charlotte Brontë's parsons are usually repulsive; Jane Austen's (with one exception) were utterly worldly, and the least attractive men in her books: the one exception was far more worldly than any drawn by George Eliot. But no one accuses Miss Austen of Agnosticism in her fiction; because everyone knows she was not an Agnostic, but a perfectly average Anglican, born and bred in a parsonage. Yet Jane Austen's novels might certainly have all been written by a pagan lady who had never even heard of Christianity, provided the pagan lady had a supreme genius for *genre*.

To me, at all events, it seems abundantly clear that if George Eliot intended to teach Agnosticism by her works of fiction, she not only succeeded singularly ill for so clever a writer, but set very oddly about it. What misery wickedness entails she shows unflinchingly; that goodness brings as much happiness as we have any right to count upon here below she shows with far more force and truth than the professedly goody-goody story-teller. Who can doubt the serene happiness, in the midst of a life often saddened by the sins and sorrows of others, of Dinah Morris? How dull must a reader be who cannot see that Maggie Tulliver was never so near happiness as while endeavouring to submit herself to the teaching of 'The Imitation of Christ'!

I would venture to say that George Eliot's novels are far from providing proofs of the fact of her Agnosticism, far from illustrating it; and that they seem to me to prove that, though she were Agnostic herself, she had no desire to make her readers so; but, on the contrary, saw that in belief, *and in conduct corresponding to belief*, lay their best hope of happiness.

Only two of Mrs. Gaskell's greater works appeared after I was born; but they were, 'Cranford' apart, her two greatest: 'Sylvia's Lovers' and 'Wives and Daughters.' Both far exceed 'Cranford' in force of narrative, and in what is

called 'power'; neither approaches it in that peculiar charm that places 'Cranford' on a pinnacle apart from all other books. 'Cranford,' utterly unlike either, as each is utterly unlike the other, is unique, as 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Tristram Shandy' are unique.

But 'Tristram Shandy' has hateful faults, and 'Cranford' is faultless. The former is singularly unequal to itself, has amazingly inferior chapters, and is in considerable parts pretty nearly unreadable; while the latter is as perfect in every smallest part as it is as a whole, it never flags or fails, and there is not a single sentence to skip, not a phrase that could be spared. 'Wuthering Heights' has no blemishes, but in the nature of things its amazing cold fires must blaze unevenly, and the strain of its suspense must relax—or no reader could stand it.

Miss Thackeray's novels were all published in my life-time. I was fifteen when 'Old Kensington' appeared, and well I remember the delight with which I read it. But Lady Ritchie is alive,[1] and this is not the place for an appreciation of her exquisite work.

Charles Reade is not alive, and it can matter no more to him than to anybody else that I should confess I have never read him with either pleasure or ease. Seven of his famous novels were published in my youth, and there were millions who rejoiced in them.

[1] Alas, that is no longer true.

Bulwer Lytton published in my time 'Kenelm Chillingly' (when I was fifteen), which I read at once, and liked, alone of his three-score works. I thought then, and think still, that it would never have been written but for 'Richard Feverel,' and was inspired by it. But, whether I cared for them or not, Lord Lytton also gave to the days of my boyhood 'The Parisians,' 'The Coming Race,' and 'Pausanias the Spartan.' I was alive when he published in *Blackwood* the best ghost-story that anyone ever wrote; but being then only a year old I did not read it immediately. It was not till I was twelve that I read 'The Haunters and the Haunted,' at midnight in a very lonely Irish country house, and it frightened me even more than Queen Victoria did.

Charles Kingsley was, of course, a contemporary, but only 'Hereward the Wake' was published after my birth. I have never re-read it since boyhood, and cannot tell if I should like it better now. As a Protestant, I was too Catholic to stand 'Hypatia' or 'Westward Ho!'; and as a Catholic I have read neither again. All of Henry Kingsley's novels appeared in my day, and I remember their vogue in country-house circles. A couple of years ago I tried to re-read 'Geoffrey Hamlyn' and 'Ravenshoe,' and nearly perished in the attempt. The style is so hugger-mugger, the sentiments so flat, the prejudices so heavy and tedious, that the tales could not catch hold. Henry Kingsley appears

more bigoted than his brother, with even less of understanding why, and with no professional justification.

Whyte Melville published just a score of his novels during my childhood and boyhood. 'Katerfelto' was the best sporting novel I ever read (the 'Jorrocks' books are not novels); and 'Holmby House,' 'The Queen's Maries,' and 'The Gladiators' are as good historical novels as any I know outside the Waverleys. All his books are honest, wholesome, and have a sort of open-air cleanliness and virility—distinctly on the side of the angels.

All Wilkie Collins's best work appeared in my time. That which the poverty of the English language compels me to call his style was excruciating, and of malice prepense: his English is Old Bailey. But, if he tells his tales with all attainable ugliness and uncomfortableness, the tales are absorbing—which is one object of a tale, and one frequently ignored by novelists.

The novels that made Miss Braddon famous all appeared when I was a child or a boy; and in them she also knew how to tell a tale so as to excite curiosity and suspense. She had no great variety, which was all the more unfortunate, as she produced three-score novels. Her characterisation depended largely on stature, colour of hair and eyes, and so forth; but she could invent

a plot and handle it ; and for people who dislike literature hers was exactly the sort of literature required.

Mrs. Henry Wood was also too like herself in most of her countless novels—of which all appeared after my birth, and none of the best after my boyhood. She was a literary cousin of Miss Braddon's, though no relation of hers. Her characterisation was much better, and some of her plots quite as good, though more 'domestic.' She could be equally sensational, and when not so was apt to become dull and prosy. I found the attempt to re-read her in riper years more difficult than I had foreseen.

Miss Yonge was giving us 'Daisy Chains' and 'Trials' in my childhood; and we were, so to speak, brought up on her. I can still read 'The Little Duke' and 'The Lances of Lynwood,' and could probably re-read 'The Heir of Redclyffe'—for a consideration: for no consideration would anyone of the heir's own age now read him.

Mrs. Oliphant, in my early boyhood, gave us 'Salem Chapel' and 'Miss Marjoribanks.' I wish somebody would give us anything like them now. As I have ventured to bracket Mrs. Henry Wood with Miss Braddon, so will I dare to say that Mrs. Oliphant dwelt in the same literary home with Mrs. Gaskell—only the latter occupied the best rooms in it, and the former lodged in the second

best. Again, I am ready to admit that a very great deal of Mrs. Oliphant (outside of 'Miss Marjoribanks' and 'Salem Chapel') is terribly flat, and much of it nearly unreadable, which can be said of nothing Mrs. Gaskell wrote.

And now let us return to the giants. George Meredith died in this century: Mr. Thomas Hardy lives, and writes, still. But their life-work in literature belongs entirely to the Victorian age, and they are Victorians. All their great works of fiction appeared after my birth, and the bulk of it during the period to which I refer in this book, my own childhood, boyhood and youth.

But of them there is no room to speak in this place.

CHAPTER VIII

In my last chapter I was wholly concerned by an attempt to illustrate the good fortune of myself and my contemporaries of childhood, boyhood and youth by a hasty citation of the names of those who, in the realm of fiction, were writing for us. On no other branch of literature did I touch at all; as to that one branch the list was wholly incomplete. Yet what a list it is! Can the new century match it?

As hurriedly given by me, that list omitted some names that might well have been included, and very likely did include some that present-day readers would leave out; but then, many present-day readers loudly profess their inability to read Sir Walter Scott, Thackeray, or Dickens. Of course we are all of us at liberty to be incapable of reading any specified author—'tis a liberty of which even a belated Victorian joyfully avails himself in regard of many of his present contemporaries—but the exercise of it does not necessarily put the author in question out of court.

As to the quite admittedly lesser writers of fiction included in my hasty citation, I am bound to confess that they seem to me at least better than ninety-nine out of a hundred of the novelists of the new century. They had, on the whole, a sounder literary conscience, a sturdier sense of literary responsibility, and finally (though I have ventured above to bracket Mrs. Henry Wood with Miss Braddon, and to perceive a spiritual affinity between Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Oliphant), more individuality.

The close of my last chapter found me with two very great names in my pen—George Meredith's and Mr. Thomas Hardy's.

The two names are mentioned together with singular frequency, certainly not by reason of any arresting likeness between the two authors, or of any rivalry between them—they were less rivals even than Dickens and Thackeray, and were less like each other. If it be said that Hardy and Meredith were alike in belonging, each of them, to the front rank of writers of English fiction, and alike in being both of them above all things psychological novelists, the points of similarity are exhausted. No doubt all great novelists are psychologists, but all great fiction is not *ex professo* psychological. Fielding, Smollett, Jane Austen, Thackeray, Dickens, and Emily Brontë were psychologists: 'there's a deal of human nature in a man,' and no writer of romance or fiction can be a great one who

does not illustrate it. But the six great authors just mentioned were possessed by the characters they created, not obsessed by certain theories of life which their characters were invented to illustrate. I do not myself believe that any theoretic work of fiction is likely to become a part of permanent literature. And the absence of theory from all the work of five out of the six novelists just cited together will secure their genius from occultation. Dickens, of course, did indulge (to his great loss) in the *roman à thèse,* but not habitually; and where he falls into it he drives home his theses by means of his *plots,* within whose ring he mostly leaves his characters a pretty free hand; where his characters are most subservient to his theme they are most lamentable, *e.g.,* nearly everybody in 'Hard Times,' the Circumlocution Office folk in 'Little Dorrit,' and his haughty aristocratics *passim.* The American gentleman, gushingly appealed to as to whether he did not find himself overpowered by the Venus de Milo, replied that he never allowed any stone gals to sit on *him.* Charles Dickens rarely allows any of his characters to have their own way with him: when he does, it is the very—mischief.

But while reading Meredith one almost feels that the psychology of his people is too much for him—and for us; and while reading Hardy one is sometimes tempted to ask if his own psychology is not too much for his characters. Hardy and Meredith

are philosophers, at least as truly as they are novelists, but they are peculiarly unlike. They are equally intimate, but Meredith is as subtle as Hardy is direct. Their atmosphere is absolutely different. Meredith's is all lambent fire of meteoric vagary; his lightning is all summer lightning and is never meant to blast anybody. It never does, and it only makes his people skip. Hardy's is all cloudy emotion: he is most at home in storm and foul weather. Meredith's attitude is full of quip and aloof amusement: he is always enjoying himself even while his creatures burn their fingers a little. Hardy suffers in his creatures, and is (suicidally perhaps) slain by their tragedy: the springs of his emotion lie in the great deeps of human fate; the sources of Meredith's laughter are the incongruities of artificial civilisation.

Meredith is laughingly *insouciant.* Hardy and his wonderful creations are alike martyrs to his agonised pessimism. Meredith is incomparably more witty, but Hardy's black and bitter melancholy is accentuated by a humour scarcely ever equalled by Meredith. Meredith has an easy affection for his children of fancy, a somewhat Chesterfieldian paternity, and he does not greatly try them: Hardy adores the creatures he has made and torments them, as he appears to think it is the function of all creators to do. Meredith treats mankind as a fine joke, very quaint and very subtle; Hardy seems to

regard it as the supreme victim of time. Meredith allows his men and women absolute free-will, and their complications are, frankly, of their own mixing: they are perverse and irresponsible, but not painfully tragic. Hardy's folk are, it would seem, shuttlecocks of circumstance, not of chance but of a necessity that is above them and stronger than they, a necessity that is pitiless, deliberate, personal, and malignant: the irresponsibility is above them, and by its bitter breath they are driven down the steeps of irremediable, poignant, and appalling tragedy. Hardy has an intense, generous and magnanimous love for the sons and daughters of his great, almost sublime, fancy. He has a pity for them that is half divine, a tenderness that is more than paternal; he is anguished by their cruel fates; but he does not admit the existence of a compassion higher than his own, of any tenderness for them that is not half divine but Divine altogether. Swift loathed mankind; Hardy's resentment seems to aim higher.

Meredith's genius was more subtle than Hardy's and, as I dare to think, more sane; but Hardy is greater, less seductive in feature, grander of stature. Like Emily Brontë, he can be compared only with the Greek tragedians. He is not modern, and therefore he cannot become old-fashioned.

Meredith was supremely modern, and Nemesis will make him obsolete. To reflect the ideas and preoccupations of to-day is to insist that to-morrow

shall call us Yesterday and hurry by. There is another thing—Dr. Johnson's singularly unfortunate prophecy that 'Tristram Shandy' would not live because it was 'odd' has been in constant quotation: George Meredith's finest work is often odd, but should it fail of immortality, it would not be because of the oddity, but it might be because he is often 'hard,' in something the same fashion and to much the same degree as Robert Browning's poetry is often 'hard.' Perhaps also Meredith is too brilliant: a fault from which most of us are entirely safe. Of course his excessive brilliance does not make him hard, but I suspect that for some readers, and not stupid readers, it makes him tiring. He is unsparingly, pitilessly epigrammatic, and a plethora of epigram is indigestible: one is apt to swallow without assimilation. Except Disraeli I can think of no English novelist whose indulgence in epigram (and splendid epigram) is so pyrotechnic; and the most dazzling fireworks end by fatiguing the spectator's eyes and neck if the display is extravagantly sustained. Between Hardy and Meredith there is another, not unimportant, divergence. Neither wrote for the school-room: but if one would hesitate before recommending all Meredith's work 'Virginibus puerisque,' one could not hesitate at all in withholding from them some of Hardy's greatest work.

In a matter of much lesser consequence there is

also a basis rather of contrast than comparison between these two great masters. Meredith's style is polished to coldness. Hardy's is plain, though admirably suitable. Meredith's is drawn from Society, his theme; Hardy's from Nature, towards which he is devout. Description with Hardy is not an ornament of his architecture, but a component of it, and often the keystone of it. Anyone so foolish as to 'skip' his descriptions would lose touch with the books themselves.

Finally, one is disposed, on completing one of Hardy's novels, incontinently to begin another, and to go on till one has re-read them all. With Meredith the best way is to read a chapter or two, and attempt no more at once; one cannot adequately assimilate a great deal of him at a time.

George Meredith was not only intensely the son of the age which produced Robert Browning, he was Browning's cousin-german. It would be difficult to find a poet and a novelist more akin. The poet is supposed to be 'harder' than the novelist, but then Browning's hardness is most insisted upon by those who do not read him. I do not believe that in Browning (even in 'Sordello') there is much that an intelligent reader cannot understand if he tries, but sometimes he has to try. Ought he to be under that necessity? Should great poetry be problematic? A great poet may call upon us to exercise our wits, but is it his province to

test our capacity for surmise, our adroitness in disentanglement ?

Browning is *not* incomprehensible, *pace* the wit who declared on hearing that Mrs. Browning had borne him an heir, 'There are now, then, not two incomprehensibles, but three incomprehensibles.' But he is occasionally difficult ; and it was his own fault, for he was assuredly a master of language who could have been invariably clear.

Meredith and Browning are always worth the trouble of understanding. But will people who read fiction and poetry for recreation be willing to take the trouble ?

Meredith I never met; but from him, very shortly before his death, I received a letter of most generous and most unexpected praise of 'Marotz.' Strange to say, the portion of this book dealing with the Contemplative Convent specially attracted him : 'I am,' he wrote, 'reverently in love with Poor Sister.'

Browning, on the contrary, never wrote to me, but I met him, and was introduced to him—by a footman.

I was invited ages ago to luncheon at the house of a very old friend in Cadogan Square. On my arrival she had not come downstairs; and in her drawing-room I found only a tall and handsome elderly gentleman. He turned as I entered, and the footman, with unusual, but I must say commend-

able, presence of mind, made us known to each other: 'Mr. Robert Browning—Mr. Drew.'

All the poet's works except 'Ferishtah,' 'Parleyings,' and 'Asolando,' had then been published, and I had read none of them except 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin,' 'How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix,' and 'The Morgue,' which I had been made to learn by heart, grudgingly and of necessity. Alone with the great man, I was full of guilty tremblings—but most unnecessarily, for neither then nor later did he make the faintest allusion to his own poetry.

It was not till much later that I became an industrious reader, and ardent devotee, of Browning. Perhaps he is not a lad's poet; and as a lad I had been (and was for ever being told that I was) too much addicted to poetry, and especially to Tennyson. I had even 'dropped into poetry' myself. When I was about seventeen I put together a lean volume of sketches in prose and verse, with the title of 'Etchings and Idylls.' We had then a wealthy cousin, who plumed herself on being literary, and a sort of country Lady Mæcenas. By her my MS. was submitted to Mrs. S. C. Hall, whose own literary fame has long ago followed her to the tomb. That critic was pleased to discern 'promise' in the 'Etchings,' but declared that the 'Idylls' showed too clearly the influence of Tennyson. Her verdict was 'Let him eschew verse

and stick to prose'—with a rider that a course of Crabbe should be tried as an antidote to Tennyson. I must say that the antidote tried *me* more thoroughly than I tried *it*. Miss Jenkyns, after submitting to Captain Brown's reading of 'Boz,' declared *ex cathedrâ*, 'I prefer Dr. Johnson.' I still prefer Tennyson to Crabbe.

But in the more important matter of eschewing the writing of poetry, and sticking to prose, Mrs. S. C. Hall's advice was taken; as I think many other writers might follow it with advantage. I do hope the public will admit this as some sign of grace in me: inglorious Miltons are so seldom mute. Alas, how many (full of grace of more eternal significance) refuse to be so! That piety is not poetry is a truth which apparently forms no part of revelation—or there would be little verse in some most excellently Catholic magazines. To the blameless authors of these rhymes it seems never to occur that they need have anything in particular to say, or that the only excuse for saying it in verse is that it cannot be said in prose. Blank verse is often real poetry; but what on earth is blank rhyme? The world's supreme poem has for its theme—eschatology; but Dante was not *merely* a devout Catholic, and being a devout Catholic does not of itself entitle or enable anybody who chooses to 'commence poet' at the expense of Our Lady, or of some great Mystery of religion.

I have often heard it urged that 'Lead, kindly Light' should not be sung in church because it is not a hymn, but a poem; and this has always struck me as being the most scathing, because wholly unconscious and unintentional, satire upon hymns. Certainly there are innumerable hymns (and hymn-books), though there is only one 'Lead, kindly Light.' But I must say the same line of criticism ought to bar the 'Dies Iræ,' the 'Urbs Cælestis Jerusalem,' and ever so many of the breviary hymns, which are poems if any exist.

Apart from the breviary and missal Latin hymns, the finest I know, of which the inspiration is Catholic doctrine, are those of Father Robert Southwell, the Jesuit martyr. I often wish some of our excellent Catholic magazines, on both sides of the Atlantic, would reproduce some of them instead of 'original' Catholic poetry. Of one of them Ben Jonson said that he would willingly have burnt much of his own work if it could have given him the authorship of that poem.

As for Milton's most glorious ode and hymn, 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,' I would give all 'Paradise Lost' and all 'Paradise Regained' for it. It is as exquisite as Perugino's 'Prophets and Sibyls,' with the super-added stateliness and majesty of Michelangelo.

All Browning's greatest work was given to the world during my boyhood. Tennyson gave us

'Enoch Arden,' the 'Idylls of the King,' 'The Holy Grail,' and much of his briefer, but greater, work—all of which I devoured, as I did everything of his except his dramas. To tell the truth, Shakespeare's are the only dramas in English poetry I ever have been able to read of sheer impulse, for sheer pleasure, apart from a sense of literary duty and obligation—with the single exception of Swinburne's 'Atalanta in Calydon'—which belongs rather to Greek than to English drama.

Tennyson, of course, was never 'hard.' He could be even too easy, and has paid the penalty of it. The people who do not really like poetry, and cannot read poetry, could read much of him, and assert without perjury that they liked it. So he cannot shake off the reputation such things as 'The May Queen' brought to him: it and 'The Brook' are perversely remembered; and 'Tithonus,' and 'Ulysses,' 'The Lotos-Eaters,' and 'A Dream of Fair Women' perversely forgotten. It is not the fashion to remember that Wordsworth could be flat, but it is much the fashion to insist that Tennyson was occasionally obvious and twaddling. Tennyson was really a poet's poet, and he is often spoken of as though he was a mere people's poet, 'middle-class' and Victorian. Preachers are sometimes belittled because their hearers can understand all they say; and Tennyson might be thought more of, if he were more difficult. Of

course he is clarity itself: being invariably intelligible, by certain gentry he is contemned as offering nothing to understand. He and his immediate predecessor achieved between them the result that the English public came to think the Laureate must necessarily be a poet; whereas no poet held the Laureateship from the loss of it by Dryden in 1689, till Southey received it, and no great poet was Laureate between Dryden and Wordsworth himself.

Of Macaulay I may, in one sense, claim to have been a contemporary, as he did not die till twenty months after my birth. Like most schoolboys who care for reading, I adored him in my school-days—and so devoutly as almost to be persuaded by him that the 'inferior Dutchman' was a great and good sovereign and man; albeit neither Throne, Principality, or Power ever persuaded me to call him King of England.

In later life, though never losing the sense of Macaulay's literary charm, much of my admiration for his works came to be transferred to his nephew's biography of him—a book that will bear almost infinite re-reading.

Among biographers, Boswell must stand aloft and alone, unclassed and supreme: the classes begin after him, and high, high up in the first class of biographers stands Sir George Otto Trevelyan. His 'Macaulay' appeared in my boyhood, and his

splendid 'Early History of Charles James Fox' before I was one-and-twenty. It is more brilliant than his Life of his uncle, but not so truly a biography: for it is more a history of certain years during which Charles Fox lived, than a Life of Fox during that period. If it *were* only a fragment of Charles Fox's Life, it would be incomparably less informative; it is as entertaining as Lord Rosebery's 'Last Phase,' as sparkling as Mr. Birrell's essays, as witty as anything of Macaulay's, and as just and accurate as it is distinguished in style. In truth to life, it is more like fiction than 'history.'

Carlyle was for a much longer time my contemporary, for I was grown up before he died; but his literary work was all completed before my birth. Froude, whose 'Reminiscences' form the oddest monument ever reared to friendship, gave most of his works to the world during my childhood and boyhood: except 'Cæsar' and 'Oceana,' I detested them all, for I was nothing if not prejudiced. To resist the seduction of their literary charm seemed to me as much a point of loyalty as a devout and orthodox listener would esteem it his duty to flee from the eloquence of a brilliant heretic. But, considered simply as a man of letters, what rival to him can the new century yet produce?

'Yet' is a saving word. After great wars

great writers have appeared; after this greatest war there may spring to birth a crop of poets, novelists, historians, biographers, men of letters greater than even the staid Victorian age has left to us. That that age should have fathered such literary giants is a curiosity of literature more startling than any noticed by the elder Disraeli.

CHAPTER IX

THE contrast between present-day life and the life of my childhood and boyhood is naturally much more striking to the eye in London and the great towns than in the country. But the change is everywhere. Even in externals the change may be noted, and that in villages very far removed from London; for no superficial contrast is ever greater than that afforded by the dress of one period and that of another; and I think that the dress of village folk, as I remember it in my childhood, was little altered from what it had been before the accession of Queen Victoria, and perhaps from what it had been under her grandfather, George III. It had its own almost permanent character, whereas nowadays it has no character of its own, but reflects at no wide angle the ever-changing fashion of the day. The younger village folk of to-day cannot, in costume, be distinguished, especially on Sundays, from townsfolk of the same class; and it is not by dress that either can instantly be recognised as not belonging to a higher social grade.

There is another difference between the country people of to-day and those of my childhood—the great difference in speech. Among the juniors there is no dialect, and the talk of the young Wessex peasant differs little from that of the young peasant of northern or eastern England. I do not mean to assert that there is now *no* difference between the speech of a northern and of a southern youthful peasant; but it has enormously dwindled, and consists chiefly in mere accent, whereas in my childhood it was a wide divergence of dialect. The remaining difference is, I think, far more noticeable in the case of young men than in that of young women. If we may judge from Dickens's cockneys, the difference in talk between the men of Sam Weller's class in his day, and those of parallel social standing now, is as marked in London as it is in the country.

There is, of course, nothing in this to cause surprise, for the spread of 'education' has effected the change, and not the mere lapse of time.

Dress, however, and even manner of speech, are (in one sense at least) only externals, though, in another sense, the former is really less a superficial matter than the latter. For the change of speech is accidental, and the change from a more or less traditional custom of dress to one that closely follows fashion is not. It is not, I believe, entirely explained by larger wages, but is much more the

result of a different attitude of—shall we say?—mind. The village folk of my childhood, it is my impression, were still (contentedly or discontentedly) imbued with the idea that there was a real difference between the 'quality' and themselves, and that a complete distinction from themselves in dress was a prerogative of the 'quality'; so that, even could they have afforded it, to affect the dress of the 'quality' would in them have been an intrusion or presumption; whereas it is pretty certain that any such idea has entirely disappeared from the minds of their grandchildren. These latter (and whether it proves them cleverer, as well as better educated, than their grandparents my readers will decide for themselves) perceive no inequality but that of means; and they are disposed to minimise the evidences of that inequality as much as possible, and the most obvious method is by the closest possible identity of costume. And this brings me to what lies deeper than externals. I began by what seems to me the plainly correct statement that between the life of to-day and that of my childhood the difference is far less striking to the eye in country places than it is in London or great towns—very largely because the *mise en scène* of country life is much more fixed; though, to the really observant eye, even that is not really fixed, but has undergone abundant though incomparably slower change, even the

aspect of inhabited and cultivated country places having subtly but greatly altered in half a century. Woodlands and pasture-land, heath-country and hill-country, present few broad changes that careless observation would detect; but agricultural lands have taken many changes that no shrewd country-bred observer would fail to note if he had sufficiently faithful memory for comparison.

There is, however, much more substantial change under the mere surface of rural life: that of which the altered habits of dress are, as I have said, only an evidence or symptom. The peasant, the villager, no longer holds the same attitude towards himself (or herself) and others. Social and political self-consciousness has awakened—perhaps to dream, but at all events no longer to acquiesce in a numb acceptance of the fixity of things. Politics were to the villager of my childhood a hobby of the 'quality,' for which the wealthy paid, as they did for their shooting or their hunting. So far as a fairly intelligent child and boy could perceive, the cottager found nothing intrinsically unfair in his landlord's claim upon his vote; professedly of no commercial value, it was a little periodical present to which his landlord was pretty welcome, though no doubt he would have been more welcome had its price been payable in cash. Contested elections could not occur where the borough was owned by one landlord;

and where the electoral division of a county coincided with an area owned by landlords of the same politics, a contest was a mere wilful aggression engineered by irresponsible, wrong-headed perversity from outside, resented as unfair, and hardly 'cricket.' Nor do I believe that there were really many who, in borough or county, held themselves aggrieved or tyrannically oppressed by its being taken a good deal for granted that electors should vote in consonance with the landlord's known politics. Canvassing was hardly regarded as more than a security that it should be plainly understood what his wishes were.

Nowadays, so entirely is all this changed, it is probable that only sexagenarian readers would be willing to credit this description of things; and almost certainly only sexagenarians would say that there was nothing intrinsically shocking in the state of things described. They, however, would, I suspect, be inclined to contend, that where there was so nearly complete a political ignorance, voters were as likely to be as well led by their landlords as by anyone else. Anyhow, the village voter of to-day is as little apt to be over-docile as his congener of the town, whether he be as well equipped in political knowledge or no. So strongly am I convinced of this that, for some little time, I have been pretty sure that canvassing for votes is, in general, a waste of time, and perhaps worse. It

very often, as I believe, creates a sense of antagonism in the canvassed, who are only disposed to see in it an attempt on the part of the canvasser to domineer, and assert social superiority. Nor am I sure that the canvassed who has this resentment is altogether wrong-headed. The ballot proclaims the principle that he has a right to keep his vote secret: why must he sacrifice his own secret beforehand by engaging to vote in a certain way? In endeavouring to convince him that he should vote for such or such a candidate, are you not quite plainly telling him that his ability to choose the right candidate is less than your own? It may be less; but have you the right to tell him so? If so, he has equally the right to hold his own ability to choose correctly above yours, and therefore to resent your obvious denial of his ability.

The theory of 'equality' was, I believe, practically undreamt of in the rural England of my childhood, and is far more universally dreamed about in the rural England of to-day than a certain type of Conservative imagines. I am immensely far from admitting the general definition of the Tory as 'the stupid party,' but there are a large number of country Conservatives who can never distinguish between what is and what they would like to be: who violently refuse to recognise the presence of a fact because they resent its existence. To put the truth plainly, I think some of these

have learned far less politically during the last sixty years than their own farm-labourers and cottagers. They may (as they ought, having so much greater advantages of education) be far better aware than their social inferiors of the non-existence anywhere at any time in history of 'equality' in fact; but they have not accepted the equally important fact, quite consciously present to the minds of their inferiors, that at this moment there is everywhere a dogged resolution to reduce inequalities, and a refusal to admit that the patent inequalities of any special moment *must* be any more a part of immutable Divine purpose than the special immoralities of any special period.

Contrasting past and present, it is inevitable that we should have in mind how greatly the actual, latest, present has been made unlike the past of sixty years ago by the events of these last seven years or so. Every village, every farm, sent its sons and husbands to the war; they went away untravelled peasants, they returned soldiers, men who had seen foreign lands—France, Belgium, Italy, Macedonia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, India. How could they come back unchanged? Soldiering they had the habit of regarding as smeared with some traditional tinge of suspicion, almost of disgrace; for over four years they were compelled to regard it as the most

imperative of duties, from which only very peculiar circumstances could serve as excuse. And in the course of their own military life they were brought to know other parts of England and other countries far enough from England; and, what is more, were brought into contact with comrades of wholly different antecedents from themselves—artizans, miners, factory-hands, shop-lads, clerks, hotel-waiters, actors, city folk of every sort; and in innumerable instances they were brought into close comradeship with young men of a social grade far above their own; in very many instances their own status was changed to that of officer—yet all of these former village-folk and farm-hands who survive have come home at last, have talked, and thought too. How immensely must the inner, less superficially visible, village life have been changed by their change! Is there any exaggeration in saying that between the villager of 1922 and the villager of 1859 there is a wider difference than there was between the villager of 1859 and his ancestor of 1659?

But nowhere is the change effected by the sixty-three years of the present writer's life, though there is great change everywhere, less apparent than in the genuine country-house of to-day and the country-house of his childhood. I say *genuine* country-house, to exclude what is really very different—the large, perhaps very large, house in

the country whose inhabitants are really wealthy Londoners, to whom it is merely one branch of expenditure entailed by their riches that they should own a big private hotel out of London whither to invite for 'week-ends,' and so forth, the acquaintances they have acquired in London. The tone of such houses is quite unlike that of the genuine country-house, and is precisely that of their owners' houses in Mayfair or Belgravia.

But the genuine country-house is by no means extinct, and, beneath externals, its life, its tone, remains, as it seems to me, more unchanged than anything else in England. Fifty years ago such houses were lighted by lamps and candles, with gas, perhaps, in kitchen and passages. Bathrooms were few, and baths were usually taken in bedrooms. The ladies wore gowns instead of short and narrow tubes of varying material. There were no telephones, and telegrams were much less frequent. There were no motor-cars, so that guests who came twenty miles for dinner did not go home to sleep. There were no 'week-ends,' though there was a first day of the week honoured less in the breach than in the observance. There was no Sunday golf or lawn tennis. Any sexagenarian's memory will suggest other differences between then and now—things vanished, like the chignon and the crinoline; things arrived, like the jazz-band and her ladyship's cigarette. But

the arrivals and disappearances are of things casual and superficial; what lies under is singularly identical with what was there three-score years ago. Just as such houses have the same smell as they had in the 'sixties (a smell never acquired by the pseudo-country-house), so is the underlying spirit the same, and to a remarkable degree is the method of life the same. For the method of life, its interweaving of duties and pleasures, is largely traditional, and the attitude towards life is the same. Nor is this to be explained by glibly saying that the inhabitants of such places, like the Bourbons, forget nothing and learn nothing; rather is it to be explained by the fact, not universally recognised, that among the people I have in mind there was less to learn because more had been for a long time already learnt. Country-houses of the sort here meant are, and for a good while have been, well-educated places. The townish reader would often, if a guest there, be surprised to find how much better read than himself his hosts and hostesses were; a man may be bookish by taste or make himself so as a hobby, but to have a general well-readness may perhaps be less easily and often acquired in a single generation than he would suppose.

This will be quite uncredited, perhaps quite incomprehensible, by those who happen only to know what I call the pseudo-country-house, which

is as like the real one as a revue is like a real play by a great playwright. Among other inevitable results of the war, there is very obvious that of a large and widespread diminution of British insularity; but this change also is far less marked in the great country-house than outside it; not because of a slower appreciation, but because the insularity *was never there* to anything like the same extent; for there a considerable knowledge of Continental literature, Continental art, and Continental life has long been traditional. Travel and tour are by no means identical; those who made the Grand Tour were not tourists in any present sense of the word; they were not herded to Paris for three days, to Switzerland for five, to Italy for nine, and herded back again, speaking nothing but English and hearing almost nothing but English, with a glance at the Louvre and a stare into Notre Dame, another stare up at Mont Blanc or into St. Peter's. They journeyed deliberately, with some French and Italian in their mouths; they were admitted into the society of Paris, Rome, Florence, and had time to see something more of foreign people than their monuments. And already at home they had learned to know the great masters of France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands; and already at home they had learned other languages than English, and knew something of the literature of other lands.

Horace Walpole and his contemporaries of the same antecedents were less insular more than a century and a half ago than the descendants of his (or their) constituents half a dozen years ago. To say this is not to ascribe peculiar merit to those so happily circumstanced, but merely to recognise the fact of the result of their opportunities. That they had greater luck in those opportunities is no reason for denying them or their use. Your great country-house has its pictures, its library, and its leisure. All the pictures may not be exactly what they call themselves; some, to quote Mr. Anstey, if not as old as they look, may be old enough to know better; but there is enough of the genuine, there are enough of masterpieces, to generate and form a taste and to familiarise those who live with them with the tradition, the genesis, and the ideals of great art, which never has been insular. Their libraries are apt to catch and hold what is permanent; which is very different from the function of the circulating library, whose profit comes from the quick dissemination of what is temporary and ephemeral.

CHAPTER X

THE purport, as far as any purport can be claimed, of these desultory papers was sufficiently indicated in the opening sentences of the first of them: a contrast between the world of a sexagenarian's earliest memories and the world he has lived to see. To the writer it seemed that in all the history of our race no other period of threescore years had witnessed change more complete. Yet the change, when those lines were written, was very far indeed from being what it has become since. I have heard many different dates or events assigned as those which really marked the end of the Middle Ages: the Accession of the Tudors, the execution of Charles I., and, much later, the winding up of the Holy Roman Empire, and the fall of the Temporal Power. If the last event were accepted as the falling of the curtain on the long drama of the Middle Ages, then the present writer was born in them, as many of his critics declare he still lives in them. If by the Middle Ages those who fix such dates for their conclusion really mean

feudalism, I dare say the French Revolution is as good a point as any other to assign, and the ending of the Holy Roman Empire can be regarded as merely one of its evidences.

Yet the feudal spirit survived the French Revolution, though not in France. And we ourselves have, only very lately indeed, witnessed its final extinction in Europe. The Prussian Kingdom, if not the German Empire, was its last stronghold. The one bond, at all comprehensible, between the two German Emperors, William and Francis Joseph, was their common adherence to feudalism and their common hatred of democracy. Democracy was the only enemy they had in common, and it made them, most unnaturally, friends, to their own ruin and that of many countries.

The extinction of the Greek Empire in 1453 restored, after a thousand years, the old condition of there being but one emperor in the civilised world. For a couple of centuries there remained but one: the rise of the Russian Empire added another. Napoleon made himself a third, and threatened to become the only one. In our own times there have been in the world nine emperors at once: of Austria, Brazil, China, of Delhi, of the French, of Germany, of Russia, of Japan, and of Mexico. Now, outside Asia, there remains not one.

But when the war began there were not only

three emperors in Europe, there were five kings in Germany and Austria, and now there is not one; there were many sovereigns in Germany, and now not one to answer '*Adsum*' to the roll-call. Neither the French Revolution nor Napoleon himself made so clean a sweep of the monarchic board. Napoleon was quite as prompt in setting kings up as he was in putting them down. If the eldest son, and heir, of the Revolution, he was no enemy of monarchs, and perhaps no implacable enemy of a feudalism that knew its own place.

If the abrupt disappearance of so many sovereigns meant nothing further than their disappearance, it would constitute a very striking difference between the portraits of 1914 and of 1922. But it means much more.

The imperial rulers of Germany, Russia, and Austria, and the German kings, grand dukes, and sovereign dukes have not merely ceased to rule: no one rules in their places. They have no successors under another title. One cannot even say that the empires, kingdoms, and duchies they governed the other day are now merely geographical expressions—for such a statement would be flatteringly incorrect. Of what precisely Russia now consists, of what Germany, of what Austria, of what Hungary, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony, Baden, who can say? Frontiers, anywhere in all those regions, mean as little as treaties. Geography

has vanished like government. The old lands no doubt remain; but it is as hard to say what their names are, as to state, with any meaning, in whose hands is the government of their peoples. Anarchy is as ruinous to geography as it is to prosperity or peace: which is not surprising, as geography is a part of history, and anarchy can have none.

In other words, the whole map of Continental Europe, eastward of the Rhine, has been torn up since 1914. There are indeed still the six peninsular monarchies: but Portugal is no longer one of them, and there are still six only because Norway and Sweden have been split into two kingdoms.

But the above is an utterly superficial statement of them.

For centuries Russia has had a government, and (if that which is rotten at core can be called strong) a strong one. It had, at all events, an affectation of civilisation. It had a religion, universal to all intents and purposes, in the European portion of the Empire. Its Revolution came, as Revolutions inevitably do come, when the conditions that mean revolution are present and are disregarded. There was plenty to sweep away: but it swept *everything* away, and made nothing; it destroyed everything, and set nothing up except destruction.

To change an autocracy into a Republic is not destruction, but substitution: in Russia, however,

the autocracy was not replaced by a Republic. A Republic was proclaimed, but has never arrived; the old rule was stamped out, but no rule succeeded. There came not even a Lord of Misrule in the bloody Carnival, but only a wild Dance of Death, compared with which the Carmagnole was a stately and decorous minuet.

No comfort and no practice of civilisation remains in Russia; and her vast national religion has been tossed overboard.

Anarchy is in its nature not creative, but destructive; yet, like other destructive organisms, it can be swiftly self-generative, and spread with morbid rapidity to the infection of previously wholesome and uncorrupted bodies. The danger of that infection is the menace which has with lightning, and apparently sudden, rapidity succeeded to the threat of Teutonic militarism. I say 'apparently sudden,' because, just as the lightning itself only seems sudden, and is in reality the inevitable and sure, if not accurately pre-calculable, outcome of atmospheric conditions which *must* so result, so it is with anarchy. Of electric conditions our forefathers remained ignorant, though they and *their* forefathers were alive enough to the danger of lightning; our forefathers' sons have betrayed as little scientific knowledge of the morbid social conditions which at last are riven by the apparently sudden flash and turmoil of anarchy.

The threat of a world-propagation of Bolshevism is more terrible and more fateful than that of the Militarism it has immediately followed: for at least two obvious reasons—the present-day world is so constituted as to be singularly unlikely to submit to Militarism; and an aggressive Militarism cannot be conducted subterraneously. No doubt the Militarism of Germany did conduct an enormous and secret propaganda, to second its actual explosion when the explosion came. But preparations for world-conquest cannot be carried on in secret: a great nation cannot arm itself for attack unobserved, and Germany's arming had been watched for many years, if not with sufficient precaution, with what should have been at any rate sufficient understanding of its meaning.

It is immensely different with the threat of world-anarchy. Its real danger does not lie in material preparations for military or naval conquest, that must always have the safeguard of visibility (which does not mean that the visibility of such preparations can without hazard be ignored), but in the fact that its propaganda is one of notions, the dissemination of a virus, the handing about of an infection of ideas destructive of mankind as such.

Militarism, in a world such as ours now is, can be no *permanent* danger, though we have only just seen how menacing it can be as a temporary

one. Because Militarism implies the submission of agents not likely to submit, and certain not to submit permanently, to their rôle in it. Immense armies, capable of world-domination, imply the willingness of a vast proportion of the world's population to be soldiers of the world-dominant power; and such willingness is less and less to be taken for granted.

It may, indeed, be the case that the future peace of the world is as likely to accrue from the refusal of the world's proletariat to fight, as from the goodwill and loyalty of signatory powers to any Convention. For there are not wanting symptoms of a disposition on the part of the world's proletariat to regard war as an exploitation of themselves whereto they will not again consent.

But there is much less security in the evidence that the classes to which Bolshevism whispers are self-armed against its suggestion, immune to its infection.

Where England stood at the beginning, or at the middle of the war, we may think we know now, because the result has come to have its retrospective influence on our opinion; but no one could know then. Where the whole world stands at the present moment, no one can know. No disaster can befall God, whether remembered or forgotten by man; but man, if forgetful of God, oblivious of His inexorable law, impatient of His guidance,

and without either patience or trust of His Providence, can grievously hurt himself. That even such hurt God can cure, we know; and that He will cure, as He has cured, we may feel sure. But that the hurt will not come we cannot know. Him we can trust, but not ourselves.

Anarchy is selfishness on its largest scale, and in its blindest mood; and selfishness is as old as man himself; and much older: as much older as Lucifer is older than Adam. God only antedates it, as He only can antedate it. Rulers of states who blithely shouldered God out of national cognizance, and relegated His position in the social consciousness to that of a purely private and personal idiosyncrasy of such individuals as chose to take count of Him, were the most efficient teachers of the false-gospel of selfishness; for man without God *can* see nothing higher than himself, and will not long acknowledge any right in others, only equal to himself, to impose upon him anything higher than his own will, more obligatory than his own desires. Man without God obviously still needs the Ten Commandments, but he will not hear of them. The last idol man will destroy is himself, though that idolatry is inevitably bound to destroy the idol itself. Rulers who dethrone God from His world-sovereignty enthrone selfishness in His place, however pretty their altruisms may sound; and the last and complete public

expression of selfishness is Anarchy—to which, for the moment, we assign a Russian name.

If God is not again to be re-assigned His world-throne, nostrums may be applied with such temporary appearances of cure as quack-remedies do often claim—symptoms may be driven inwards and out of sight ; but our maladies will not have gone.

If the present paper should appear a wandering from the scope intended by all these papers, I cannot admit that is so. It is no more than, but not less than, an allusion to a world-condition more different from that of sixty years ago than could be pictured in any of the previous chapters, which dealt only with alterations of customs, manners, and the life of various classes. When my life began, the echoes of the last war were barely audible ; and it had not been a great war, in its origin, its conduct, or its effects. It left all its protagonists almost precisely as it found them. To England it made no difference ; it had not interrupted the current of her national life, nor, when it ended, was her national life altered in the least.

We have just been through the most stupendous war that has ever maddened the world : and the conflict did not end with the Armistice, and shows no reliable signs of ending with the 'Peace.' That war, at all events, changed completely our whole national life : into it habit,

custom, commerce, business, were flung as unreservedly as the lives of men; and the daily course of women, old men, and such juniors as necessity held at home was as different from what it had been as the occupations of those who went overseas to fight. England, and all the world, had one idea only: and all her occupations and theirs were the various expressions of it. Her centre of gravity had been knocked out of its place, and has not been recovered. When I was born, a great mutiny had but just been quelled in our greatest dependency: it had moved the mind and imagination of the whole British people more poignantly than anything that had happened since a Napoleonic invasion had been really believed to be imminent: but not because the mutiny of Sepoys was dreaded as any menace to our own security at home. Some, of our blood, were in peril: brave men, as brave women, helpless children, far, far away at the gateways of the dawn; and their danger sickened us, not with selfish, but with noble, pain. Perhaps there was a hazard for our whole Asiatic Empire: but few really believed it would be torn from us; and none could believe that its loss would ruin our homes, or even recast our national life at home.

Anyway, that dim, dark, distant upheaval was mastered. And our home-ways were not altered, our home-thoughts turned adrift.

And now?

There is a mutiny much nearer, though it is christened Bolshevism; not only as much nearer as Russia is nearer to England than is India, but made much nearer by the fact that Petrograd is nearer to London now than St. Petersburg was then. And that nearer mutiny has a threat of infection that the Indian uprising could never have. However wide Indian unrest could have spread threescore years ago, there was in its very nature a local quality that circumscribed its menace to India itself. It could taint none of the British troops sent to quell it: much less could it in the faintest degree infect our home or Colonial populations. Whereas there is nothing local in the spirit of Bolshevism, nothing national, nothing that owes its infective power to community of race, or blood, or language, or religious belief.

Towards the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century there was one august figure in whom all Europe saw a menace. What he had already done engendered a not merely timid apprehension of what he might design to do, and his designs had mostly been carried out. He hardly could have believed himself more irresistible than the quaking potentates of Europe thought him. Yet the menace of one man's ambition can never be a permanent one to the world. A Napoleon can never bequeath *himself* to his heir, and though

he had kept his power to the end of his own life, as he failed to do, it could never without himself have survived in his son. A superman has never begotten another superman to be heir of his achievement: his conquests will always disintegrate with his own disappearance from the world. By some also it might be urged that Napoleon was rather a menace to his crowned contemporaries than to their peoples. He was no foe to social order: he had brought social order out of the chaos of the Revolution. He was no destroyer of social comfort: he liked to ensure it, as his own gift, to the peoples of which he had made himself Dictator. His rule was not inimical to material prosperity: he brought it back when it had seemed lost. He was no moral iconoclast. If his own moral conduct was not greatly superior to that of monarchs who had laid more claim to respectability, he fully appreciated the necessity for public morality, for the sanctity of the family; and was too clear-sighted not to be aware that the sole reliable basis of morality must be religion. So, with a bravery far greater than the easier heroism of a warrior in the field, he insisted on the recall of the exiled Church. He was no destroyer of civilisation, but its restorer and promoter. Education, arts, sciences, were all taken under his potent protection; and religion, the basis of civilisation, as of morality, he reinstated.

From monarchs he could, and did, steal thrones and crowns; but, if the monarchs who remained might well regard him with terror and misgiving, there was nothing in his reign to threaten the peoples of the world with the destruction of everything they had—the security of order, the protection of law, the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour or of their inheritance, the exercise of religion, material prosperity, and such adornments of life as civilisation is able to add to it.

Had Napoleon been immortal, and with all the powers of youth that Tithonus outlived, his egregious genius, his limitless ambition, his miraculous power of making facts of his wishes would never have constituted so dire a menace to the peoples of the world as Missionary Bolshevism.

So that, if it is to the period of his highest success that we must turn for any real parallel between it, with its menace, and the present moment with its menace, still the parallel would be inexact: the danger then being of its essence temporary, bound to pass with the death of one man (as it did pass before his death), and not, while it lasted, corruptive of the benefits of civil life, the securities of order and of law everywhere, material prosperity and comfort, security of property, the slow-garnered fruits of immemorial civilisation, morality, and religion.

CHAPTER XI

When this series of papers began, the war, which had come four years before to change everything, was as yet unfinished. During those four years it had come to be realised, I suppose, by almost everyone, that the old pre-war world was gone for ever, as thoroughly lost to us as the United States were lost to England when the War of American Independence was over.

Without ascribing to that vanished world any shining perfection, many of us regretted its disappearance: we knew its faults and were used to them, as people know the thin places, the faded places, or even the patched places in old garments —and are comfortable in them. Those who had already lived through, perhaps, two generations, could not flatter themselves that they at any rate would live to see the new, the promised, world in full emergence. They could hardly be its heirs, or come into their share of its inheritance. So that they, these elderly persons, felt themselves in a fashion disinherited: like those who having dwelt

(as their forbears dwelt) pleasantly on the whole if imperfectly, in an old house, faulty and not exactly splendid, but familiar, and replete with comforts and memories, have lived to see their old home pulled down, and know themselves to be too old to live to see the new house, planned to be erected on its site. Very likely, in their foolish but faithful hearts, they can never believe that the new house will be as easy, or as comfortable, to live in as the old. They are assured that it will be much better, larger, more commodious, lighter, better-ventilated, handsomer, more convenient, cleaner, all the old tolerated but intolerable inconveniences and incongruities replaced by the latest and most perfect contrivances for the supply of light, air, and comfort. They have seen the plans, and have had to admit the architect's cleverness: have been quite unable to deny that he has shown admirable skill and forethought. But there seems, maybe, to them to be *too much architecture* about the new house, too great elaboration of ingenuity in planning. The dear old discarded, vanished house never had, so far as they were aware, any traceable architect. In successive generations rooms were added, enlarged, or altered as the need came. It never was planned or designed, but grew like the family itself. And how it suited them!

So these, temporarily houseless, poor things

feel themselves homeless: and have chill misgivings of never having a home again. Their juniors very probably think more of the fine new house that is coming. They are, or seem, more practical than the seniors. They are not disposed to cry over spilt milk; and surely an antiquated, superannuated old house, that had to go, and has gone, is spilt milk. The old house was well enough—in its way. It had a sort of makeshift suitability, they confess. But was it architecture? Was it really a house at all?—with its odd aggregation of rooms, its queerly placed entrances, its several staircases, instead of one grand stairway, leading directly to all the fine upper rooms, directly, and so visibly to every entrant, as to have something almost allegorical about its grandeur—Excelsior! What inconveniences the old house had—what obsolete appliances for light, for warmth, for cleanliness!—especially for cleanliness. Why, in the new house, the lavish supply of hot water would simply force everybody to be clean; the inhabitants could, if they chose, almost pass their whole time in hot water without effort or trouble. 'Perhaps they will,' think the doubting seniors.

Yes, when these Pages from the Past began to appear,[1] the war had not been won; and though the old pre-war world was gone, the new, post-war, better world was hardly due. No one was so

[1] In *The Month*.

unreasonable as to demand its arrival till Victory should have come to be its herald.

Then Victory did come: and the Armistice: and finally Peace. With whom? With Germany and her Allies of course. With whom else had we to arrive at peace? Quite so. It could hardly have struck anyone that England needed any truce with herself, an armistice at home, in view of any victory to be achieved over herself. Foreign wars are proverbially strong safeguards of domestic peace.

Well, the victory of the Allies over Germany and her confederates came, and the Armistice came, and Peace treaties with Germany and her confederates have been drawn up and have been signed. And, perhaps, these things already seem to have happened a long while ago. What a distant dream is the memory of London's orgy of delight and happiness on Armistice night: a Saturnalian *Te Deum,* perhaps, but as true as death, sincere as anguish. Millions must remember it. Can any of them deny that it is a Page from the Past—a page blazing with lurid colours, elf-lights, but ever so long past?

I would ask them to turn back to it, if they can, and see how very, very distant in experience it reads.

I, who am but rarely in London, was in London on that day, brought thither for farewells to one bound overseas—and gone.

A few minutes before eleven, on that strange Armistice morning, I was in Buckingham Palace Road, shopping. Coming out again into the street, presently there were heard up in the air bombish noises, and for an instant there came the silly idea, 'Are they—those wonderful Germans—treating us to a last impotent defiance and insult, a final air-raid?'

I wonder if anyone else had for a second that stupid fancy?

There were in a moment plenty of faces at the windows, of figures at the shop-doors. Some had the dubious look of people who might be sharing my doubt. But the doubt was already gone, and the signals in the air were understood. Being so near it, I went round at once to the Palace. In front of it there were already a few others—not many; in five minutes there were hundreds, in ten minutes there were thousands, crowded against the grille of the palace yard, clinging to the old, great, Queen's monument, pouring, pouring down the Mall past the ugly, captive German guns. On the open space within the railings, soldiers were changing guard. The King came to the balcony on the palace-front, and the Queen, and their daughter, and the King's brother.

Over and over again, as it seemed, the soldiers' band played 'God save the King,' and the people outside sang it; every eye fixed on the King

himself. No one ever hears it more reverently than he; it is a hymn—to God: a nation's prayer. For his own great office, for the peoples over whom it sets him, for God to Whom the Empire Prayer is lifted, no listener ever stands fuller of reverence.

On that unique day he stood very silently, almost motionless. Between him and his people there was nothing but space, but the space was too wide for audible words. His lips moved, but I think with no attempted, futile, loud speech: a whisper could be heard as well whither it was addressed. The King seemed very still, very grave, like one in God's house rapt in the thought of what God has given. It was a very devout quietness. The people, it was plain to see, understood it all and respected. Victory had come, by Divine Mercy. England had not been vanquished. With a tiny army she had moved, at an austere word, to stand by her friends against the hugest, most efficient, armed force the world had ever known: at the hard word 'Duty' whispered in her ear, she had answered 'Adsum,' and risen from her island hearth to go out and help her assaulted neighbours; and after a long agony she had, once again, triumphed. I am sure the people understood; she had again conquered—but how long the agony had been! And of England's slow torture the King of all the English must be mindful on this Victory morning. Her fighting sons would

presently come home, but how many had *gone* home! The King must be thinking of that: the King and the Queen at his side.

Like him she stood in a very thoughtful quietness. There have been sovereigns who, in the hour of conquest, have been so drunken with success as to seem unaware what victory has cost: as if none fell in battles that have been won, as if at any rate only enemies fell in them: as if at home were no war-orphans, stricken parents, desolate wives. Sovereigns, too, who have snatched all war's acrid glory to themselves, as if they had been their own sole legionaries and captains, the agents as well as the master-minds of their victorious campaigns. And so their triumphs have had some tinge of selfishness, of callous, blatant *loudness*, even of vulgarity.

But our sovereigns, on that strange, half-realised morning of longed-for victory, were wholly otherwise. Theirs was a very reverent self-silence, a most mindful quietness and a very noble simplicity of gratitude; and the people showed in every glance upwards to them that they felt and honoured it.

They joined, time and again, in singing 'Rule, Britannia'; but they loved their sovereigns no less because they perceived in them a grave memory that many Britons had, in guarding her, passed beneath the waves, though high as heaven.

They thought, and the King and Queen thought, very thankfully, of victory; but Victory's august robes are dark with blood. Among their own kin and friends many were widowed, sonless, fatherless, though victory had come at last; and the people would have reverenced their sovereigns less had they seemed, in the great hour, forgetful of their subjects' loss and mourning. Even Victory has but slow salve for torn hearts. And our sovereigns were not the sovereigns only of them who lived to share the triumph, but of them who lay far from home, that their homes and the homes of others might stand unviolated, of those tens and tens of thousands of young men who had been willing to go themselves childless down eternity that the children of others might still be born free.

This memory—which thousands must share with me—of that scene upon that memorable day: is it not altogether a memory, a Page, veritably, from the Past?—a page very noble, very solemn, quiet, but incomparably august, and belonging irretrievably to the past?

The night of that same day makes a sharply different page, though not less singular. The scene just described, though thousands were in it, was like a confidence, a whisper, between the sovereigns and their people. The soft greyness of the morning suited it.

After dark the colour-scheme was red and

black. And there was certainly nothing confidential, meditative, about its sound-tones: nothing could be less suggestive of a whisper. It was anything rather than quiet. There was no hush of restraint about it, nor hush of any kind, nor restraint of any sort. All London seemed to have resolved itself into a jazz-band, and to have come out of doors to jazz together, without rehearsal, or any tiddling fuss about combination or understanding of other performers' instruments, other performers' steps. It was a glare of noise, a blaze of red laughter, fiery, blinding, deafening—like a barrage. It was not merely post-war, it was pre-Christian, pre-Roman even. To call it Bacchantic would suggest Bacchus, who was not notably in charge; and might suggest something choric, which it was not in the least.

One heard people who remembered tell each other it was Mafeking madness gone madder. On Mafeking night I was far from England, and could not remember. But I should think it was not like anything that ever had been; or at all like anything for which we are like to have occasion again, since we are to have no more wars, but only quarrels with our friends and with each other—just to bleed ourselves ill-temperedly to death, instead of reverting to the execrable taste of weakening our alien foes.

Certainly Armistice night in London was queer.

Roystering, not measurably distant from rowdy, and yet not absolutely rowdy: blatant enough—hypercritical people might have said vulgar—only no one was disposed to hypercriticism or to any criticism; and how can that be vulgar which is genuine, sincere, and real? No one could doubt its naked sincerity: savage nudity may be indecorous, but is it vulgar? Some clothing is less decorous and more indecent, and the clothing of many 'civilised' persons is incomparably less decent and more vulgar.

The burning of captive enemy guns did not seem vulgar, but maniacal—'lest we remember.'

There was, externally, nothing tender about Armistice night out of doors; but it was transcendently good-tempered. Indoors there must have been anguish of remembrance, though in the streets there was evidence of none, which does not mean that there was none. Children there knew that their fathers would now come home, and they would not be orphans; wives that their husbands would not be gone for ever; elders that their lads would take again the vacant places at hearth and board. So they danced, or smilingly watched the uncouth dancings.

Those behind the windows seemed forgotten, but may not have been: those whose boys no Armistice, and no Peace, could clothe again, for their sight, in the fair raiment of the flesh till

the world's own Last Post shall sound: those whom no victory could make less widowed, or bring home the father to earn again their children's bread. Many a girl behind those illuminated casements had but lately heard that her betrothed would never be her husband—he had been called to a more dread tryst with Death. She knew herself jilted for the stern mistress Duty, hand-in-hand with whom her lover had, but now, passed out of her own streaming sight. To all those, how piercing must have been in the ears of their hearts the shouts of barbaric jollity smashing the sable silence of the night, the swishing stamp of dancing feet.

Perhaps Victory of her nature is hard-hearted, like all one-sided beings. She must be one-sided, or she would be but the obverse of the shining medal whose reverse is wan Defeat. 'Vae Victis' cried the ancients, as if there were no pangs among the victors, no losses, no wounds and slow-healing scars.

Certainly the two leaves of the Diptych that make up one's memories of Victory night in London are pictures sharply different in tone and quality: but each to be for ever remembered. Both are pages from the past, with more of resemblance, perhaps, to what had gone before than to any present we have as yet attained. They should have been the wind-up of the old world; but the new world, so boastfully promised, has not

come to hand. It may come, but will hardly be identified with the fancy portraits published on either side of the Atlantic. The brazen old world had been in society so long that she managed her own affairs, chose her own partners, and 'sat out' without much occasion for a chaperon: but the lovely and youthful new world was to be exposed to no risks—safeguarded from indiscretions, have all her partners arranged for her, and be precluded from any rash and private sittings-out by a most effectual chaperon, the League of Nations. But the chaperon has not yet exactly succeeded in herself achieving the necessary solidity of personal status, nor the authority without which she can never enforce obedience. It is all very well for this new Mrs. General to form her lips into gracefully decorous words like papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes, and prisms: only Fanny Dorrit won't listen, and forms her own lips to pronounce very different words. Like Mrs. General the new chaperon is rather expensive: but, also like her, not very efficient. I do not gather that Mrs. General was much beloved: everyone was more eager to recommend her to other employers than to secure her decorous presence themselves; though she had one elderly admirer who was ready to break up his home for her sake. Here, of course, the parallel between her and the new chaperon breaks down.

The new world spends a great deal more than the old, but without the old world's thrifty calculation of her income: she spends first and then looks in someone's pocket for the money. The young woman is, frankly, extravagant: fonder, it would seem, of show than of solvency. So she is a good deal embarrassed. Like other young persons she is prone to indiscretion in the choice of her friends, and some of her acquaintances are not easily tolerated by her more tried friends, who have borne much for her sake. 'Noscitur a sociis' they murmur, and for their own part flatly refuse to be dragged into intimacy with some of the new world's new partners. The old world may have been duller, but she was incomparably more dignified than the new: and more respected out of doors. She was known outside as an excellent manager, and kept her house on the whole in exemplary order. Matrons who succeed in doing that are usually well thought of by neighbours, even if all the neighbours do not passionately love her, even if she is reputed fond of her money, and apt to be prudent in the spending of it. But young housekeepers whose children are rebellious, whose servants are extravagant, flaunting, overdressed, and pert to their mistress, are not so well respected in other houses: especially if it comes to be believed that the lady has shady friends, that indeed it is safer not to lean too confidently

on her friendship, or rely entirely on her word: that on the whole she is readier to oblige strangers than those who have helped her at her need. Even a very talkative young housemistress ends by losing the confidence of elderly neighbours of standing: it is rare to talk a great deal without talking too much. Babblers mostly contradict themselves in a day or two. Gush is seldom for long sincere. Your incessant, glib talker is apt to tell fibs.

The new world is never silent for ten minutes. She reverses the rôle of the sailor's famous parrot. She is not a very patient or accurate thinker, but she talks the more; and, unfortunately, some of her phrases have been picked up in queer company. Her bank-balance may not be comfortable reading, but she yells cheques. Her company manners are not faultless, her home manners are deplorable; it's worse manners to snatch, and to put your fingers in other people's plates, than to put your own knife in your own mouth.

Of course the old world was not nearly so clever as the new. She was slower, and cared more for understanding her own affairs than for brilliance or originality. She was not very boldly experimental. She was apter at keeping house than at theories of house-keeping: maybe, she trusted more comfortably to experience than to abstract principles of domestic science. Her neighbours' daughters might get prizes at school for domestic

science, but she practised it, almost as unconsciously as M. Jourdain had been talking prose all his life without knowing it. She had not the reputation of a clever woman, but she knew more than she said, and did more than she knew. On the whole, other women's husbands rather envied her homely capacity. She was not over-fond of brilliant servants, preferring servants who kept their place and knew her ways. Her servants were not allowed 'followers,' and her footmen were not indulged with latch-keys. They had to be indoors of nights; and if she had heard of their making speeches at street corners she would know the reason why.

Perhaps she was a little middle-class. Middle-class matrons have a *bourgeois* fondness for having more money than they spend, and mostly take a sturdy pleasure in knowing that they are better off than they seem. They would certainly dislike giving away more than they have got.

The new world is cleverer. Too clever by half. Her cleverness is the asset she is always offering her creditors instead of ready money. She hopes it will be taken and mistaken for actual cash. Why should not promises be current coin in the Land of Promise? After all, they are only post-dated cheques, and the money *may* come in before the date.

The new world has lovelier sentiments than the old. If her sons starve, she says heart-moving

things about them, and says them with rivers of real tears. She is rather given to tears, and gets maudlin in her cups—cups not of wine, of course, but brimming with the intoxicant of sentiment. The milk of her human kindness may be a bit watery with those tears, but it is flowing and copious.

She is tender to a fault for the erring, if not very encouraging to those of her household who have not yet misbehaved. Her pity for animals is extreme; on the whole, she likes them better than men, certainly better than children. When animals get their old-age pensions they will be paid with less scrutiny and deduction than are those of human claimants. It will be remembered that those claimants are dumb.

She is wider-minded, this new world, than the old—more apt to perceive that crime is only the influence of environment; theft the result of wanting something the poor thief has the misfortune to lack; divorce the singularly natural sequel of an ageing or disagreeable wife (or husband), or else of a more cultured beauty-sense in the person anxious to contract a new marriage, and (necessarily) eager to be free from the old and stale one; she has not much pity for the discarded wife or husband, whose disappearance is essential to the happiness of the poor thing panting to escape from his (or her) bonds; though, no doubt,

every care will be bestowed on divorced dogs, even if they have not been in fault, and for puppies orphaned by the divorce of their fickle parents.

She is brilliantly hand-to-mouth, the new world—a mistress of temporary expedients. She is an expert in remedies for disease which cure you an hour or two before you die. She has only read the Protestant version of the Scriptures (and not that very lately), and 'takes no thought for the morrow.' So an expedient for Monday is always forthcoming, though it leaves Tuesday a good deal in the lurch.

She lives in London, and is not much interested in her country inheritance. Outlying estates acquired by her forbears are, she finds, troublesome to administer, and apt to be expensive. She likes the rents, but hates being bored by the troubles of ownership. She sends copious, and very beautiful, telegrams down to those out-of-sight-out-of-mind estates, but does not greatly care what her agents are about, or what agents she has there. Remarkably queer some of those agents are, and their language about herself is peculiar. But it never occurs to her that language means anything: she is used to her own.

She is almost abjectly sincere in one thing, her timid dread of any rows out of doors; her pacifism is as genuine as 'blue funk.' Pacifism, of course, is the art of quarrelling only with one's friends,

never with an enemy, never even admitting that an enemy is at all hostile. Her mamma knew very well who were her enemies, and didn't mind showing that she knew. If other ladies 'said things' about her, they mostly did it behind her back—but, of course, she was told, and she soon let them perceive that she knew all about it, and intended behaving herself accordingly. Ladies did not make faces at her in the street (ladies were ladies then, and besides, they didn't dare). But the old world's daughter is quite used to hearing herself abused 'loud out,' and seldom attempts a repartee. She hardly ever goes abroad without some 'lady' making faces at her, or even putting her tongue out; she can't help seeing it, but she takes no notice. Her mamma would have given that lady 'what for'; but then, her mamma did not pretend to be pacifist, and didn't think it paid to put up with 'cheek': she wouldn't stand it, indoors or out, it was thoroughly understood she would not, and it was not attempted. If a row with a neighbour was necessary, she wasn't the woman to shrink from it. So rows were uncommon. Certainly she would not have pretended to like any other lady because the man who worked her central heating liked her, or abstained from teaching any lady her place for fear of a rumpus in her own basement. . . . Yet anything like a row below stairs was very rare in her time, and on the whole

her neighbours thought a good deal of her. Absolute love is, perhaps, seldom seen among neighbours; but they knew what she meant, which is generally the case when you know yourself. They all confessed she managed her own family well. Out of doors she was civil, if not gushing; and her ready money was sincerely respected. . . .

Well, well. The new world is very young yet. There may always be improvement where there's room for it—and there's plenty.

CHAPTER XII

ONLY a few weeks before the great war broke upon the world, it was my good fortune to spend an afternoon at Farnborough Hill, and have tea with the Empress.

Among Pages from the Past that page of recollection may be introduced with, at all events, as much fitness as can be claimed for some of the others.

For years before her death, the Empress Eugénie had dispensed with the attendance of a lady-in-waiting : never, indeed, at Farnborough had she affected in her household any semblance of a Court. Of Courts in Exile very much has been written ; and, though to a certain class of reader they have been made ground of a rather cheap ridicule, as if the essential of a Court were wealth and material splendour, to gentler minds such records have appealed more strongly than any Court chronicles of sovereigns still basking in the sunshine of power and prosperity.

But there is no doubt that the line fixed for herself by the Empress Eugénie from her coming

to England as an exile, and adhered to with undeviating rigidity to the end of her life, added greatly to English appreciation of the unseen, unheard imperial guest. She made no public appearance anywhere; was heard giving no message; received no 'interviewer'; took part in no functions, opened no bazaars, laid no foundation-stones. Her name was her own, her rank was her own, and she kept both to herself, never during half a century allowing either to be exploited for any purpose, even of charity.

Thus her presence in England was never an embarrassment to the country or to its rulers from the day that she landed on its shores from Sir John Burgoyne's yacht. This resolute, unflinching adherence to a rôle of complete silence and seclusion was an illustration of two salient features of her character: she was a lady of extreme dignity and of immense common sense.

From the time that she dispensed even with the presence in her household of a lady-in-waiting, many of the services usually rendered by such a companion were given to the Empress voluntarily, and out of personal regard and devotion, by Miss Isabel Vesey, a very old friend of mine. In England Miss Vesey did not even live in the Empress's house; though abroad, at Cap Martin for instance, she was frequently her guest for long periods

It was owing to Miss Vesey that I was able to

spend that long afternoon at Farnborough Hill, which I at least find so interesting to recall. She had spoken to the Empress about me and my books, and had been asked by Her Majesty to bring me to see her.

We first of all spent some time in the museum of Napoleonic relics which the owner of Farnborough Hill had arranged in its grounds. The museum is spacious, and its contents are full of interest—of absorbing interest to one who has always been subject to the spell of the 'Napoleonic Legend,' an untiring student of its inexhaustible documents.

Roughly speaking, the Napoleon relics in the museum at Farnborough Hill are divisible into four groups. (1) Those of Napoleon I. and the Empress Josephine, (2) those of the King of Rome, Napoleon II., (3) those of Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie, (4) those of their son, the Prince Imperial. Of the first group the collection is richer than one would expect to find in a museum out of France, and arranged long after the hasty departure from France of the Empress. No doubt these objects were, at the date of the sudden fall of the Empire and the flight of the Empress from the Tuileries, far from Paris, safely installed in houses, such as the Château of Pierrefonds, which were her private property, and soon recognised as such by the Republican Government.

Pierrefonds is huge enough to house the contents of all the museums of the world: in the Farnborough Hill museum there is a large and beautiful oil-painting of it; but it would be hard for any painting to do justice to its beauty and grandeur, or to give an idea of the charm of its surroundings. Within a few weeks of seeing the picture I was at Pierrefonds, during the Retreat from Mons. The enormous fortalice, if it suggested war, suggested wars ended centuries ago, and lay smiling in a broad light of peace.

No one could look at such a king's home and not think of Windsor, but it is not at all like Windsor; it does not loom darkly above a winding river, with a town gathered about its feet. There is no river by it, and no town. It shines whitely in the sunlight, on flattish upland country, not a park but a chace.

I have said that there are many relics of Napoleon I. at the Farnborough museum—swords and other accoutrements and weapons, coats that he wore in battle, one of the famous cocked hats, decorations, articles of personal use while he was campaigning, and so on.

There are very beautiful dresses of the Empress Josephine's (surprisingly tiny to us who have only seen her full-length portraits), and many other of her personal belongings.

Among the larger objects is the magnificent

State Carriage in which the Empress Eugénie was driven to her marriage with Napoleon III., and there is the other one which carried her to her Coronation. There is also a bijou pony-phaeton sent by Queen Victoria for the Prince Imperial as a child; again, a little complete Highlander's costume for him from the same friend. There is his cradle, with all its bedding.

Then there are many of his books, uniforms, guns, etc.

We spent a long time in the museum, for no idea has been given here of the copiousness of the collection.

Then we went up to the Château—though not built for the Empress, it is more like a château than an English country-house. She enlarged it but did not alter its character: the heraldic decorations of the original owner remain as placed, and to them none of her own has been added.

The stone fireplace of the entrance-hall, displaying the arms of the gentleman who built the house, remains also unreplaced and unaltered.

Under a wide awning, just outside the door opening upon the high terrace, we found the Empress. She was sitting in a chaise-longue of wicker, reading a little, and chatting a little with the gentleman who had been the Emperor's secretary, and since his death had been her own.

She was then in her eighty-ninth year, but had

not the appearance of an old person. Her slim, graceful figure was upright, with no stoop of the shoulders, and none of the sinking down into itself so commonly seen in very old ladies. Nor had she the manner of an old person; or, when she talked, the voice of one. She was younger-seeming than most ladies of sixty.

I could not, myself, trace any resemblance between her as I saw her, and the portraits I knew so well of her as she looked in the heyday of her husband's prosperity. They were painted sixty years earlier, and it would not be surprising if there had remained no trace of identity. Yet many have declared that to the day of her death she was like what she had been at the time of her marriage in 1853.

Like or different, she was a beautiful woman still: the features, the eyes, the lines and form of the face, were all beautiful, but with a stronger expression of intellect in the old face than there had been in the young.

When the Empress moved and walked—then, least of all, could one think of her as very old. She walked beautifully, and so few have this special grace—it is not an accomplishment, 'deportment.' Nothing gives a greater air of dignity, though many an Italian peasant-woman has it, especially among the women of the hill-countries. When it is there, as it was with the Empress Eugénie, it seems

as much the play of a natural function as breathing, as unconscious and as unlearnt.

While we were at tea the Empress, as I was the stranger, talked almost exclusively to myself: at first about books, and my own books. Then, when that duty was done (and I think it was done as a duty), we spoke of France, and of friends I had there: among whom the oldest of my friends were relations of her husband's family. One of these, I had always suspected, had neither loved the Empress nor been loved by her; and at the mention of the name she began to look at her rings, and to move them on her fingers. This I knew was a danger-signal, and I slipped off to another subject.

Presently the Empress said:

'But, besides being a writer, are you not in the army?'

Then we talked of the army; and she was much more at her ease among the soldiers than among the books, my own or anyone's.

All questions of practical detail really interested her, especially such details as concern pay, allowances, etc.

She loved to hear what pay a Chaplain received, from his first employment as an 'Acting Chaplain without Allowances' to the time when he was a First Class Chaplain; how he ranked; to what foreign stations he might be sent, and for how long

at a time; what leave he got; why he was not liable to tours of service in India; and whether non-Catholic Chaplains, having wives and families, got more pay, or more allowances, than Catholic Chaplains.

It interested her extremely to hear about officers' messes, their quarters in barracks, the furniture in those personal quarters, and in their ante-rooms, and mess-rooms; whether it belonged to them or to the War Office; who bore the expense of a move when a regiment was shifted abroad or to another home-station.

But what interested her most of all was to hear about our regulations concerning married soldiers of warrant-rank, non-commissioned rank, or privates; how a soldier might be married 'on the strength of the regiment' or 'off the strength' but with permission, and eligible for the admission of his wife to fill a vacancy on the strength when such should occur; how, on the contrary, a soldier marrying without permission had no such claim, and might never succeed in getting his wife 'on the strength,' though sometimes he might. It seemed to give her extreme pleasure to hear details the *ménage* of married soldiers; how for their accommodation there were 'Married Quarters'; of what these houses consisted—front parlour-kitchen, working-kitchen, coal-house, bedrooms—and how many bedrooms; that married soldiers drew

rations for their families, proportionate to their numbers, and also drew coal-rations, also proportioned to the numbers in the family ; that the washing of officers' and men's linen, bed and table-linen was 'put out' among the married soldiers' wives, and paid for, so that each soldier's wife could thus earn something regularly for her family—all these things the Empress heard with interest, putting many questions, and making comments of strong approval.

'How practical the English are,' she said ; 'never overlooking the importance of little things.'

It happened that then she spoke of the Emperor and his last illness, and of the surgeon who operated upon him. Finally we spoke of some friends with whom I had lately been staying in her own country ; and she told me to tell them she would like them to come and see her. She remembered them well.

I asked her if she remembered kissing the gentleman—when he was a boy of twelve. His father was then British Ambassador in Paris, and the Emperor and Empress had come, on a semi-official occasion, to the Embassy. The boy had been given the duty of presenting Her Majesty with a bouquet as soon as his parents had welcomed her at the foot of the steps ; when she received it the Empress had stooped down and kissed him.

'He declared,' I told her, 'that he wouldn't wash his face for three weeks afterwards !'

I asked her if she also remembered having received, from another English boy of twelve, a letter, accompanying a novel, requesting her permission to dedicate the book to herself.

'Yes, I do remember it,' she answered. 'Was it yourself?'

'Yes, Ma'am. It was the first novel I ever wrote.'

'That I guessed! I was so sorry to refuse. But I have never accepted the dedication of any book since I came to England.'

It was amusing that she said this with all seriousness, as if it were quite necessary to excuse herself for not agreeing to such a proposal from a boy of twelve.

'Why were you so anxious to dedicate your book to me?' she asked.

'Because I adored Napoleon the First,' I replied, with more instant sincerity than tact.

She smiled, and we talked a little of my hero-worship of the great Emperor.

Presently, after an hour's talking, it was time for Miss Vesey and myself to go. I was returning to Salisbury Plain, and there was not more than time to reach the station. Within a very few weeks I was marching along the roads of invaded France, often side by side with French soldiers, whose fathers had been her husband's subjects.

'She says,' Miss Vesey told me, as we walked

down the hill, 'that her life has had one dream between two realities. The old life in Spain was real, and the life, since 1870, here in England: they are separated by the dream, which was the Empire.'

She did not strike me as one who would ever care for dreams.

Just before starting for America, in 1919, I was at Farnborough Hill again—my cousin with me. We had been given permission to come and see the pictures. The Empress we could not see. She was ill and confined to her own room. Her niece (*à la mode de Bretagne*), Madame D'Atainville, took us through the rooms and showed us the pictures, furniture, etc.

The former are chiefly portraits, of extreme interest, by great painters, representing various members of the Bonaparte dynasty and family. The latter constitutes a fine collection of the best examples of French *meubles*.

About ten days before the date of our visit, the Empress had had an accident. Coming down alone from her own rooms, she fell from the top of the stairs to the bottom: and must have done so with considerable noise, as the person who heard it was the cook in a rather distant kitchen. Rushing to the spot, she found the Empress lying at the foot of the stairs, blood flowing from her forehead. But the Empress was soon upon her feet again, and preparing to go back to her room.

'But, Ma'am,' said the cook, 'won't Your Majesty find it very hard getting up the stairs again?'

'Not so hard as I found it coming down,' the Empress replied; and up she went.

CHAPTER XIII

EARLY in the last decade of the last century, a book of mine, which is now reprinted in a cheap edition, appeared in *Temple Bar*, as a serial, lasting for half a year. I had frequently written short stories for various magazines, all of which, I think, are now long defunct—not, I hope, in consequence of my contributions. Those contributions were of small consequence; but they must have been worthless indeed if they were not worth what those magazines paid for them—sums ranging from fifteen shillings to a couple of guineas.

I believe it was about the year 1892 that I wrote a full-fledged novel, with an American heroine, and with a title that I still think rather a good one, 'Miss Massachusetts.' This I sent to a London publisher, whose name I have long forgotten: all I can recollect about the firm is that it was not one of the well-known publishing houses, that it offered me ten pounds for the book, and that it duly and promptly paid the money.

Of a very different book, long since a classic,

Miss Austen remarks: 'That any bookseller should think it worth while to purchase what he did not think it worth while to publish, seems extraordinary.' In the case of which she is speaking it was indeed extraordinary, for the book in question, for which a Bath bookseller had given her ten pounds, but which he never published, was 'Northanger Abbey.'

Why the London publisher should give even ten pounds for 'Miss Massachusetts' cannot be surmised: but that he did not publish it is not so mysterious. Probably on reflection he considered that it would be throwing good money after bad, and that it was better to cut a small loss than to risk a much larger one. At all events, I heard no more of my book, and am sure it was never published, at least under the title I had given it.

Temple Bar accepted 'Mr. Beke of the Blacks' at once, and paid for it very handsomely: about as much for the British serial rights (I say 'about,' for it was bought 'at per page') as nowadays I should receive for the British rights in a novel.

By many readers the story was admired, by some in a way that did not delight the author; for, later on, when 'Marotz' and 'San Celestino,' 'Dromina,' and 'Hurdcott' had appeared, they insisted that 'Mr. Beke' was the best of them all.

This I mention because the appreciation of

this tale brought me many letters addressed to the offices of the publishers; and one very laudatory one from a lady of whom I knew only that she was the widow of the Earl of Cardigan, who had led the famous charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. A regular literary correspondence ensued, lasting over several months, and ending in a pressing invitation to Deene, her beautiful Northamptonshire home, where she said I should meet a number of Catholic friends of mine. The invitation was for a week, from a Tuesday to a Tuesday, and all arrangements would be made for my saying Mass. Almost on the same day I received, from one of the old Catholic friends mentioned by Lady Cardigan, an urgent request that I would be sure to go to Deene, as we had not met since his marriage, and he much wished that I should know his wife.

To Deene I accordingly went; and that visit of over thirty years ago was so unlike any other I ever made, that I propose to let it stand as a page, though not at all a typical one, from the past. The house, with all its beauty and interest, was indeed like many other great houses; but the hostess and her methods of entertaining her guests were original, or at any rate unusual.

At the roadside station no one, I think, but myself got out. A carriage met me, and we drove through solitary, but pretty, lanes for several miles.

By the time the lodge gates of Deene were reached there was a low, light mist about the feet and knees of the trees in the park, and a high cold moon up in the sky, not very bright, but sufficient to show the great, long Gothic mass of the house, standing by a narrow water.

> The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
> Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

Through an entrance-tower I was led into an enormous hall, which seemed full of people, who had just finished tea. By the tea-table sat our hostess, who, after welcoming me with extreme cordiality, informed me that the hall had been roofed at the same time, and with the same wood, as Westminster Hall. She was dressed from head to foot in accordion-pleated white chiffon, with a zone of gilt brass about her slim waist; her hair, of the same colour as the zone, worn in innumerable tight curls. She was already old, though nothing near so old as she loved to darkly hint. During our stay, I heard more than one lady try to entrap her into a definite avowal of what her age was; but she was quite as fond of ignoring hints as of conveying them.

Very soon I was invited to go with her to see her own writing-room or reading-room, and further invited to behold my own photograph on the chimney-piece, between those of the Prince

of Wales (his late Majesty) and the Duke of Cambridge.

'You will have the Duke of Cambridge's room,' she said. 'You will find it very comfortable.'

She then proceeded to touch a spring in the wall, which was covered, all round the room, with books. The shelves moved forward and disclosed a door leading down steps into a long, narrow apartment of several rooms lined with cupboards.

'To-morrow, after luncheon, I will take you there to see my dresses. I have three hundred and sixty-five. And I sing as many songs, in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Latin—seven languages. I will sing you Gounod's *Ave Maria* in Latin or Italian, which you like. I can dance the dances of half a dozen countries: I used always to dance for my friends when they came here, but I have given that up. I was on my honeymoon when you were born. How do you like my house? Is not it beautiful?—you shall see it all to-morrow. But it is so big that when I am here alone there are forty rooms between my own bedroom and the next (my maid's) with anyone in it. What does it matter? How can one be lonely with God there? Monsignor, I like your religion best. There is more heart in it. And it was the religion of all the great men of the Middle Ages. I like the Middle Ages better than the present times.

But I cannot be a Catholic—I'm bound in honour. Dear my lord made me promise. But my present husband, you know, is a Catholic—of course. His Excellency the Count of Lancastre, nephew of the great Portuguese Duke of Saldanha. He descends from John of Gaunt. You won't meet the Count of Lancastre here: he lives in Paris. He doesn't like living in the country. But I do: I never find it dull. I have my books, and my music, and my dear dogs, and my friends to write to, when I have none here. Dear my lord left me all the estates, and I could have left them as I found them, all encumbered, and spent all the money, but I have paid off all the mortgages, and they are free. It is a pity that dear my lord's title should have merged into a marquess's family and become a mere title of courtesy for his eldest son. In this room I wrote all my letters to you. It is so very good of you to come. I bribed you with the de Lisles and Miss Petre. The de Lisles are very old friends of yours, are they not? You knew Dizzy's Eustace Lyle? No, only his widow; and this Mr. de Lisle is his son. Though stout, he is learned and clever, is he not? . . .' and so on, for a long time, with reiterated asseverations that she liked our religion best.

'Eustace Lyle! Yes, and Monsignor Catesby, as Dizzy calls him. I knew him quite well. So did you, of course. Monsignor Catesby was a good

name for Dizzy to hit on, was it not? I believe Dizzy also liked your religion best in his heart. He would have liked to be a Cardinal better than to be Archbishop of Canterbury. I'm almost a bishop myself—I am patron of so many livings. . . .'

At last she decided it was time I should see my room, and we went out to the staircase, which began near the door of her library, rising from an inner hall. In the middle of this hall was a huge glass case, in which stood a horse, stuffed, and behaving like a horse in a monument.

'That is dear my lord's charger which he rode at Balaclava. And those,' pointing to other glass cases, 'are the uniforms he wore that day. Above them you see is my portrait of which I sent you a photograph—in coronation robes.'

I could not help wondering for whose coronation she had put them on. She had not married till years after Queen Victoria, still happily reigning, had come to the throne.

Before dinner we all met in the great hall, our hostess dressed like old prints I had seen of Margaret of Anjou. Her dress, high at the throat, was from head to foot of cloth of gold, and looked terribly heavy; it was very long, and round her waist was a broad and very heavy zone of brass gilt, studded with enormous 'jewels'; on her head a crown—not a coronet—of the same metal, similarly enriched with big 'gems,' as big as filberts.

At dinner—on this occasion I went in with her—she sat in a sort of folding box, open towards the table, to ward off draughts.

Someone near me told the old story of a gentleman who, calling on a lady much devoted to her children, found in the drawing-room her youngest little boy. 'And how are you, my little man?' asked the visitor, lifting the child up by pressing the palms of his hands against the little fellow's temples. Setting him down again he was horrified to find the boy was dead! At that moment the door opened and the visitor's hostess entered, leading in her second youngest child. 'Good heavens, Mr. ——,' cried the poor lady, 'what is the matter with my darling Tommy?' 'Dead, I'm afraid.' 'Dead! Oh, Mr. ——! How did he die? He was perfectly well ten minutes ago!' 'No doubt. I am distressed beyond measure, but —I killed him.' 'You—*killed him* . . . killed him!! How? . . .' 'I merely,' answered the visitor, 'took him up, to say *How do you do?* like this.' And he proceeded to show how harmless had been his action, on the other little boy, and let him down—dead also.

'What are you laughing at down there?' inquired *our* hostess.

The tale was repeated, and she remarked gravely:

'He must have been a very awkward man: and cruel too, I should think. Indeed it seems to

me that you are all cruel too. The lady must have been overwhelmed with distress. I trust she had other children. I am a strong advocate for large families.'

After dinner, in the great hall, she sang for us, in most of the seven languages, and the crown.

'I will now sing, to please Monsignor,' she said, 'Gounod's *Ave Maria*.'

Which she did, in Italian. It was a wonderful performance.

On the following morning we were led to the church, close at hand, in the park.

'This,' she said, showing us a large enclosure along the south wall, 'is my pew. There *I* sit. These stools,' of which there were nine or ten, 'are for my dear dogs. If the clergyman preaches too long I pinch them and they yelp. That is my little hint.'

In the afternoon we were taken to see the splendid, but ruinous, and I believe never completed or inhabited, house of Sir Christopher Hatton.

At dinner I was repeatedly asked by our hostess if ghosts frightened me. On the first occasion I replied that I did not know, as I had never seen one.

'Because, you know,' she explained, 'there is a ghost here. Deene is famous for its ghost. A nun's ghost. I *hope* she will not frighten you.'

'With so many Protestants here, it would be rather hard if she picked me out to frighten. She ought to frighten some of you instead.'

Almost all the guests were asked if seeing a ghost would alarm them much.

'I should not like any guest of mine,' she protested hospitably, 'to be *really*, seriously, alarmed.'

When we had returned to the hall, she disappeared.

Twenty minutes later a loud knocking, like that of an impatient postman with a registered letter, was heard on the panelling at the lower end of the hall. Presently a door in the panels opened, showing a dimly-lighted gallery, along which advanced, with Siddons-like or Mrs. Vincent Crummles-like step, a nun of no known Order, hands crossed on breast (as nuns always *do* walk), and a colossal rosary at her waist—a rosary, the fewness of whose beads was atoned for by their immense size.

Her ladyship's dogs, of some Court breed, no doubt, howled dismally, as the ghost with alternate slide and pause, advanced from the corridor into our midst. There arrived, the nun thus spake:

'Dear friends! I hope you are not *really* frightened. It is only myself. Do not be really alarmed.'

'Monsignor,' declared one of my fellow-guests, 'is trembling like a leaf.'

Trembling was hardly strong enough. I *shook*, but perhaps with an emotion more cheerful than terror.

'Dear Monsignor,' cried the nun, much pleased, 'it is only myself—Lady Cardigan. The worst of this dress is that it conceals one's hair.'

'I'm not so sure of that,' I heard someone murmur.

On the following morning we were all bidden to be at the *manège* at eleven, to behold our hostess ride. She rode in a very ample mulberry-coloured habit, with a bodice made of one of dear my lord's Hussar tunics, resplendent with gold lace.

'This horse,' she announced from the mounting-block, 'was given me by the German Emperor. His name is Kaiser.'

Very solemnly this imperial animal Siddonsed (it was neither a walk nor a trot, an amble nor a stroll) round and round the *manège*. No doubt his rider had still a good seat, no doubt she had ridden well.

Dismounting, she showed us an enormous travelling carriage, like one of those at Madame Tussaud's.

'In this,' she explained, 'dear my lord and I made our honeymoon. We started in it from Deene, and crossed the Channel and the Alps in it, visited all the great Italian cities in it, and returned to Deene in it; in 1858, the year Monsignor was born.'

At luncheon she herself carved, seated in her three-sided box-screen: her nine or ten dogs gathered round her in vibrating suspense. They

were not overlooked: for the slices of turkey or of chicken, of pheasant or of wild-duck, went, with strict impartiality, alternately from the carving-fork to a guest's plate or a dog's mouth. The carving *knife* had another and a more hazardous function—far more terrifying to the observer than the ghost had been—it exercised a grim fascination on the beholder, and a trembling apprehension. From time to time she would raise the hand clutching the knife, and draw the finger lying along its upper edge sharply across her upper lip, with a rapid, sweeping motion, that threatened at each repetition to lay the tip of her nose upon the plate she was filling.

I had been urgently admonished to look out for this: but, even forewarned, its first occurrence made me leap in my chair. All the while the carver discoursed: of large families and the iniquity of small ones; of tight stays and their abominable effects.

'Most ladies nowadays,' she would constantly affirm, 'have their lungs and livers all mixed up with their hearts, because they lace themselves up like lunatics in strait-waistcoats . . .'

Every hour of every day had its appointed employment. No pleasure was left to chance. Her guests *should* be entertained, she would see to it; and she did see to it.

But the finale of the visit was its most striking feature.

All were invited to stay till Tuesday. On Saturday morning every guest was informed that station-omnibus, broughams, etc., would be at the door at eleven—there was an excellent train at eleven twenty-five. It was terrible to part so soon from her dear friends, but if they *must* go, then they must all come again.

And at eleven the dear laughing friends did clamber into the carriages, and leave Deene to its mistress and its ghost.

'I was there once before,' said one of the guests; 'everything happened just the same, in exactly the same order.'

'Were you all sent away on Saturday?'

'No, we only came on Saturday, and stayed till Tuesday, the day we were supposed to go. She danced the Cachucha for us. And Fifine swallowed a hard-boiled egg in aspic whole, and was unwell: that was the only difference.'

Lady Cardigan lived for many years after that time: and was not, I think, *enormously* old when she died. She had always liked to exaggerate the idea of her great age, though her dress was very youthful. She kept her promise to 'dear my lord,' and never became a Catholic; but I believe she was sincere in saying that she 'liked our religion best.' Sincerity, whatever her failings may have been, was one of her undoubted characteristics.

CHAPTER XIV

THE Empress Eugénie, of whom I spoke in the last chapter but one, lived indeed to ninety-four; but, as she only died in 1920, the great span of her life carries us, after all, only as far back as 1826, when Charles X. was reigning in France and George IV. in England.

My own grandfather, as I have mentioned, was born nine years before the French Revolution; he could remember persons born during the reign of the last of the Stuart sovereigns, while Queen Anne was still alive. I can myself, as I have said, remember very well indeed a lady who had known the widow of the last Stuart prince who claimed the throne of England, and who had once seemed near gaining it.

The lady of whom I speak was herself of a type now quite extinct: nearly extinct when, in the 'eighties of last century, I knew her well, and was meeting her daily.

She was not only extremely proud of her high birth, but entirely innocent of any suspicion that

it was ill-bred or ill-mannered to let her consciousness of it appear. Nor do I believe that it would have been easy to accuse her, even silently, of ill-manners or ill-breeding. She possessed a high and constant courtesy, finer, in some ways, than is often seen now. But she had different sorts, rather than different degrees, of courtesy: one sort for what she would, I am afraid, have called 'the common people,' by which she did not mean people who were 'common,' but simply the ordinary poor, a class which did not include impoverished but well-born persons, in regard to whom she would not conceive that the accident of their poverty had in the least lowered their station, or altered their social claims. To the poor she was faultlessly courteous, but I doubt if she knew anything about them: she was no Lady Sarah Brotherton, than whom Trollope has left us few characters more perfectly drawn, whose real life was spent in the cottages of her brother's tenants. She had another, and an impeccable, courtesy for a footman, of whom she knew, and thought it became her to know, no more than his Christian name.

Her courtesy was not greater, but wholly different in quality, for those whom she regarded as her equals. Towards those who so regarded themselves, but whose claim to equality she would have scouted, she practised a much grimmer courtesy, though no one could have denied that it

was courtesy of a certain order. Of Royal personages she thought very much, and very often, not in the least regarding them as being of the same flesh and blood as people, however eminent, whether by birth or station, who were not Royal. She was a strict moralist, and would not have permitted in her hearing the faintest allusion to improper persons or events; but she would with constant complacency allude to her own descent from a son of Charles II., who was no relation whatever to Queen Catherine of Braganza.

To be, as she called it, 'about' any Royal personage, was in her opinion a privilege to be almost devoutly desired, certainly to be valued with ineffable gratitude, by anyone of any rank, or any gifts, no matter how unsuited those gifts might be to such a position.

For literature she had a high esteem, and of literature she had a competent knowledge. She was quite aware that there is an aristocracy of letters; but she would rank, and would take it for granted that everybody else must rank, the highest position in the aristocracy of letters much lower than even a moderate position in the aristocracy of birth.

Everyone remembers Gibbon's grandiose tribute to Henry Fielding, but my old friend would not have subscribed its implication.

'Our immortal Fielding,' says Gibbon, 'was

of the younger branch of the Earls of Denbigh, who drew their origin from the Counts of Hapsburg. The successors of Charles V. may disdain their brethren of England, but the romance of "Tom Jones," that exquisite picture of humour and manners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial and the Imperial Eagle of Austria.' It *has* outlived the Imperial Eagle of Austria; but my friend would have ranked its author higher as being 'of the younger branch of the Earls of Denbigh,' let alone his drawing his descent from the Counts of Hapsburg, than as being the prince of literature that he was.

She simply could not have understood Voltaire's anger with Congreve when the latter wished the Frenchman to understand that he was visiting not only a famous dramatist but a man of consequence by birth. All her sympathy would have been with Congreve. When she read, as I have no doubt she did read, Macaulay's essay on Madame d'Arblay, all the great man's fury against Dr. Burney for allowing his daughter Fanny to become a Keeper of the Queen's robes would, I am sure, appear to my friend sheer affectation or poisonous Radicalism. Much as she would admire 'Evelina' and rejoice in its brilliance, its wit, and its genius, she would have thought Miss Burney happier 'in lacing Queen Charlotte's stays' (a duty which I think Macaulay invented for her) than in having

written it. Fully recognising that Dr. Burney's daughter had written one of the greatest works of genius a woman ever wrote, and the first novel of first-rate rank any Englishwoman ever did write, she would simply and sincerely be irritated by the great Whig's vehement invectives against the Doctor for not only permitting but influencing his daughter to leave her home and her pen for 'five years of slavery,' to be called of mornings by 'a waiting woman's bell to a waiting woman's duties.'

What would have struck *her* was not the unfitness of a genius, but wholly unused to Courts, and characteristically unsuited to dependence: of a woman of letters of the highest eminence, but completely without experience of, or capacity for, her duties; but the absence, on the part of a music-teacher's daughter, to any sort of claim to so intimate a connection with one of her sovereigns.

My friend's withers would have been quite unwrung by Charles Dickens's habitual scorn of noblemen, for his noblemen are obviously of no monarch's creation, but entirely of his own. No doubt she read 'Little Dorrit' and its more spiteful than humorous description of Hampton Court and its aristocratic, but not affluent, inmates. Her sympathies, however, would not have tended in the direction of the Meagles family, even of Pet, but of Pet's mother-in-law. Not because the

Meagles family are the three most intolerable bores ever given to us by Dickens or any other great genius, but because they were 'common' and Pet's mother was quite right in being alive to it.

At the same time that I was daily meeting the lady of whom I have been speaking, I was also constantly meeting another lady, perhaps fourteen years younger, but already, I suppose, eighty years old, and a much greater 'character.' This was Miss Constantia Blount, profanely called Tanty Blount by her friends (behind her back, *bien entendu*).

She was quite as bigoted an aristocratic as the other, but had a more unfettered tongue, and much more wit. She would employ both weapons without restraint and, I think, without much reluctance: and relate her prowess subsequently with immense glee. The older lady seldom expressed disapproval verbally, relying (not unsuccessfully) upon an arctic silence, accompanied by a peculiar and terrifying constriction of the eyes and eyebrows. Miss Tanty Blount thought more of the public, and preferred to have something more entertaining to report of her encounters.

'About a month ago,' she told me once, 'I dined with the So-and-so's in Cromwell Road, and the President of the Royal Academy sat next me. Of course he knew I was a Catholic; and he opened up a conversation by asking if I wasn't a Roman.

"Anything but," I told him; "our family has been English since the Tower of Babel." "Oh," says he, "I didn't mean that: but having studied painting in Rome, everything to do with Rome interests me." "Very likely," I said (pretty coolly, not as if it concerned me much where he had 'studied' or what interested him), "when I used to be there, there was a thing I liked seeing—one of the great Roman palaces when the prince entertained: rows of great reception rooms all splendidly lit up, the huge staircase illuminated, men carrying lights or torches on every step, and the prince himself carrying lights and walking backwards to usher the Pope or a Cardinal upstairs. . . ." "I dare say it was pretty," says my gentleman, "I never saw that." "I don't suppose you ever did," I shot out, both barrels at once. "*I* shouldn't have if I hadn't known all the Roman princes." Sir P.R.A. won't ask me *again* if I'm not a Roman.'

She lived, then at all events, with her brother, Mr. George Blount, who was Norroy King of Arms, as silent in her presence, and as mild an old gentleman as she was conversational and (on occasion) truculent.

To one another they did not, so far as appeared, talk much. At table it reminded one of the conversation between Sir George Downing and his mother, as reported in Mr. Pepys' diary for February 27, 1666–7:

'It's good broth, son.'

'Yes, it's good broth.'

'Confirm all and say, Yes, very good broth.' . . .

'Good pork.'

'Yes, good pork.'

'Yes, very good pork.'

It was always my firm belief that Miss Blount was afraid of no created being; but she declared she was frightened of Queen Victoria.

Till very late in life she had never met Her Majesty under Her Majesty's own roof, and this she determined to do.

'It wasn't difficult to get an invitation,' she told me, 'and I got it. It was for a great gathering in St. George's Hall at Windsor. Presently the Queen went round, and she came to me. When I had made my curtsey, she said: "Miss Blount, I know you wished to come to this party. Would you mind telling me why?" I pointed up at the roof, where the arms of the old Knights of the Garters are, and said: "Ma'am, seventeen of those are the shields of arms of my ancestors. I thought I was as fit to be here as another." The Queen laughed softly, and said: "Miss Blount, I quite agree with you." All the same I was frightened. My knees shook under me. No one else ever frightened me. I've been at royal courts abroad, and no king or queen mattered sixpence to me. I wasn't at all frightened of the Pope,

when I went to him; but Queen Victoria did frighten me. I should think, if she was displeased with you, she would make you feel you had no business to *exist*.'

One day she said, in unusually subdued humour:

'One always knows how people speak of one behind one's back. They call me a snob—because I talk of big people.'

'I suppose,' I suggested, 'everybody talks about the sort of people they see most of.'

'That's just it. That's charity and common sense both.'

She seemed so much pleased that I laughed and asked her a rather bold question:

'You remember Baroness Bernstein—*née* Beatrix Esmond? Did you ever meet anybody like her?'

'You mean me!' she cried, hugely delighted. 'But she wasn't always a very proper lady, though she married a bishop; and I have always been strictly so.' Which was perfectly true.

Of another lady, not at all like either of the two of whom I have been speaking, I am reminded by Miss Blount's allusion to the Roman princes. This was Lady Redington, who died, alas, many years ago. She was by birth one of the Irish Talbots, and all her family had been Catholics like herself. In early life she spent much of her time in Rome, with her cousin, the very saintly Princess

Borghese, and also with her sister, Princess Doria, both of whom were Talbots, daughters of John, sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury.

Lady Redington I wish to speak of here because of an extremely interesting story she told me.

Her father and her uncle were very loving brothers, and both had the same initial, one being John Talbot, and the other James Talbot (it may have been Joseph, but I think not; for I fancy the other was John Joseph).

One of these lads had a passionate desire to be a soldier, and to serve in the wars; and boldly but secretly sat himself down and wrote to the great Wellington, eagerly, and, one must conclude, eloquently, setting forth his heart's desire. Lord Wellington was moved, and the reply was a commission, addressed to Ensign (or possibly Lieutenant) J. Talbot, Castle Talbot, Ireland.

The elder brother opened the packet, which contained no allusion to any application for a commission, and concluded it must be intended for himself. He at once expressed his resolve to join his regiment forthwith. The younger brother, heart-broken but loyal and loving, would not tell him that he had written and begged to be allowed to serve, and that the commission was therefore his own property. He only urged that it was better, in case of any accident, that the younger brother rather than the elder should fall.

But the elder insisted that honour called *him* to the field rather than his junior. Does not the scene, enacted long before 'The Virginians' was written, recall that memorable one between Madam Rachel Esmond's two sons?

It ended like the other. The elder brother went.

But the younger *could* not stay behind. To plead for another commission was impossible. But he left home soon after his senior, and in England betook himself to an officer commanding a regiment just embarking for France, who was well known to the lad's father. To him he told, in confidence, his tale; and the kind man was touched by the young man's generous silence towards his brother, and persuaded by his earnestness that he was one of those who should serve.

'Look here,' he said, 'we are just leaving, and I have my full complement of officers—all but the chaplain, who has fallen, at the last moment, too ill to serve. I doubt he'll die before we get over. I'll tell you what. I'll take you. You shall have the chaplain's berth and draw the chaplain's rations and allowances, and be borne on our regimental books as the chaplain. I can't grant commissions, but I can recommend for one anyone that distinguishes himself under my command. You'll learn drill and discipline as you go along, and see service, and learn an officer's

job. We'll ship you as chaplain; and what you'll come back as, if you do come back, will depend on yourself.'

So young Talbot the Catholic was shipped as chaplain, and went overseas. It was a weekly embarrassment when Sunday came round. The officers knew, but the men were not supposed to know: but even the men presently became aware that every Sunday morning the chaplain was ill, and quite unfit to leave his cabin, quite unable to officiate; that every Sunday afternoon he was much mended, and every Sunday evening quite well.

But though they never had the benefit of his ministrations, every soldier loved him: there was no better officer. Brave as a lion, he was gentle and kind, held clean talk (as became a chaplain), and used no profane talk; led a blameless, merry life, and soon picked up as competent a knowledge of a combatant officer's duties as any combatant officer among them all. He was a good drill, and had a fine word of command, and, what mattered as much, a genius for command. The men obeyed him joyfully, and he could have done anything with them.

When opportunity came, as soon it did come, his bravery was noted by all; and presently, when many a young gallant officer fell, no one was surprised to find Chaplain Talbot step into the place of one of them.

Perhaps colonels could do such things more easily in those days than now. Anyway, it is a true story, and (I think) a quaint and pretty one.

I can hear now the voice and tones of the narrator. She was a singularly delightful person; and in youth must have been very beautiful, to the end markedly handsome. She also represented a type now extinct. Extremely *grande dame*, her most striking characteristics were grace and graciousness: not the surface graciousness, merely, of manner and training, but that which flowed outward from a deeper and finer source, from an abundantly kind and cordial heart. She talked, as few do talk now, racily, wittily, and with a wonderful gift of conveying pictures; and with the more wonderful gift of conveying to her hearers that she would rather be talking to them than to anybody else in the universe. Her son, the Right Hon. Christopher Redington, had but one fault in his life—its shortness. One little tale of Lady Redington's I remember. Calling upon her one afternoon in her London house, I found her laughing. 'Another visitor,' she said, 'has just left me. Our Irish butler (who is a very cautious man) came up to say there was a gentleman below—would I see him? "What is his name? Who is he?" I asked. "His *name*, my lady, is Lord Magheramorne—he says." Well—I didn't recognise it a bit. My old friend (as it soon proved to be)

had just been made a peer, and I had heard of it; but had never heard the title he had chosen. "Lord Magheramorne!" I said, "I don't know any such person. I never *heard* of him." "Well, my lady," said the butler, "the gentleman do bear a wonderful resemblance to that Sir James McGarel-Hogg that comes here so often."'

CHAPTER XV

A FEW days after the publication of Mr. Leslie's 'Life of Cardinal Manning,' it happened that we, my cousin and namesake and myself, were lunching with a friend who had been in several Liberal ministries, and had served under Mr. Gladstone in his second administration. Of Mr. Gladstone he had been not only a political adherent, but a close personal friend. Our talk turning upon the new biography of the great Cardinal, he told the following somewhat peculiar anecdote.

Just at the time when Mr. George Errington's mission to the Vatican was being proposed and discussed, the Prime Minister was talking *en tête à tête* to his junior, and the question of the Vatican Mission came up.

'I wonder,' said the younger politician, 'what Cardinal Manning thinks of it.'

Mr. Gladstone received the surmise anything but graciously.

'What Cardinal Manning thinks,' he laid down, with his forward, upward sweep of the right hand,

'on that, or any subject, is of no consequence to you or to me.'

His junior appears to have heard this pronouncement with more surprise than edification. He seems to have recollected more clearly that the Cardinal and the Prime Minister had once been warm friends than that they had ceased to be so.

The rancour, if there was any, was, I can answer for it, on the side of the layman. On several occasions, long after his truculent diatribes on 'The Vatican Decrees' and 'Vaticanism' had appeared, I remember very well the Cardinal's speaking of Mr. Gladstone to me, and always with a singular gentleness, in a tone of regretful, almost wistful, affection. This I mentioned to the *conteur* of the anecdote I have just given, quoting the Cardinal's saying, 'Dear Gladstone! Lesser and inferior minds were about him, and influenced him.'

This dictum my friend did not rebut, but agreed that it was true, and seemed to believe that Gladstone during his later years was much liable to the influence of such 'lesser and inferior minds.'

When 'The Vatican Decrees, bearing on Civil Allegiance,' and 'Vaticanism' appeared, I was a boy, and still an Anglican, nor did I then know any Catholics. The opinions I heard expressed were those of non-Catholics, but I remember that

they were adverse to the Anglican protagonist, as being rancorous, full of bile and gall.

The Gladstonian I have been quoting is not of great age—while listening to his reminiscences I was tempted to wish that he were older, that his recollections might reach farther back!

On the wall was hanging a very fine portrait, by Gerard, of our host's grandfather, Napoleon's famous aide-de-camp and general, the Comte de Flahault, as a young man of remarkable beauty and distinction of appearance.

'I know much more of *Madame* de Flahault, from the incessant references to her in the Memoirs —Madame de Dino's especially,' said I.

'Of course—they hated each other like poison. My grandmother was a warrior, and neither gave nor took quarter.'

'Do you remember her?'

'Remember her! I should think so. She did not die till I was grown up, and was always very kind to me. When I was a boy she was French Ambassadress here. Of course I remember my grandfather de Flahault equally well, he did not die till I was four-and-twenty.'

[Here I indulged in my usual exercise on such occasions, thinking: 'Only two steps from Napoleon I.; during nearly a quarter of a century this speaker must have spoken constantly with a grandfather to whom on innumerable occasions

Napoleon, the grandfather's master, gave orders as his aide-de-camp.']

'Madame de Flahault,' he continued, 'was, as I have said, a great fighter. Once a number of ladies were amusing themselves by imagining a female Ministry; and each of them drew up her own list. When they were read out, it turned out that each lady had put down my grandmother as *War Minister.*'

I had just re-read Sir George Trevelyan's 'Life of Macaulay' and asked if he remembered him.

'Yes, but only that. I did not know him.'

While he was speaking of Comte de Flahault it seemed to me wonderful that I should be listening to one who had known so well, and been so nearly related to, a French general who had seen the rise of the First Empire and the fall of the Second, who had seen the surrender of the first Napoleon and of the third, been a contemporary of Waterloo and of Sedan.

We spoke of Thomas Moore, his father's guest at Sloperton Cottage for over thirty years. He said the Wiltshire country-folk, aware that the gentleman was a celebrity, and famed as a writer, were immovably convinced that he must be the author of the book they knew best after the Bible, 'Old Moore's Almanack.'

This caused them to have frequent recurrence to the poet in pursuit of weather prognostics; and

on occasion led to great surprise at his being abroad at night when even they knew there was to be no moon, and rain almost certain.

On the only occasion when I myself stayed at Bowood, I was given the room which had been regarded as 'Mr. Moore's,' from his very frequent occupancy of it. No ghost appeared, and indeed it suggested none; nor could the most timidly superstitious much dread the apparition of the genial, lively, most kindly and amiable little minstrel, whom the big Scott found so delightful a guest, and the life-wrecked Byron so tender a biographer.

The bedroom hardly suggested its old, illustrious former inmate at all; it seemed too modern. It was easier to conjure up his image downstairs in the room that had so often, during a whole generation, echoed to his voice, as he filled it with Irish melody, pretty eagerly observant the while how his audience was appreciating.

Re-reading to-day Sir Walter Scott's diary and its notice of Moore's visit to Abbotsford, its *obiter dicta* concerning Byron, and all the Great Unknown's previous references to the other poets who were his contemporaries, his letters to and from them, his personal intercourse with them, nothing could be more satisfactory than one's sense of his sincerity, his generous admission of their merit and his hearty conviction of it. Of jealousy towards a brother bard he was apparently

constitutionally incapable: a rival poet's fame he could only regard as an honour to the brotherhood of poets. It is true that his power of appreciation was more marked than his power of discrimination, though he shows on many occasions that he had discrimination also. That he was himself a poet he did not doubt, but he saw clearly how immensely as a poet Burns towered above himself.

How far Byron was sincere when he wrote, in the copy of 'The Giaour' he was sending Scott, 'To the Monarch of Parnassus, from one of his subjects,' we need not ask ourselves: it was no doubt, at any rate, a sincere act of contrition for 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'; but we need not in the least doubt Scott's own sincerity when he said to Ballantyne, 'James, Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow.' That Wordsworth did not regard Scott as a poet in his own sense of the word seems to me pretty certain; and it would also appear that Scott was not unaware of it. But that did not chill his own admiration for Wordsworth as a really great poet. Unfortunately the value of such admiration was somewhat cheapened by its being given elsewhere with equal, if not greater, generosity. I suspect Scott ranked both Crabbe and Southey higher as poets than Wordsworth. He refused the Laureateship for himself, and begged and

obtained it for Southey. That of itself was no proof of his thinking his friend a great poet, for he was well aware that, since Dryden, there had been a long line of wearers of the Official Laurel who were scarcely poets at all: and I do not doubt that he thought the Laureateship beneath himself. But he clearly was under the impression that 'Thalaba' and 'Queen Orraca,' 'Kehama' and the rest of them, were great poems. He was indeed apt to conclude that large poems were great ones.

He over-estimated Moore as a poet, and certainly under-estimated Coleridge: that Keats and Shelley were immeasurably greater than Crabbe and Southey he had no suspicion.

It was probably impossible for him to admire Dryden so much and to see why he should admire Shelley and Keats at all. He does not, however, slight them except by silence.

Of Campbell he speaks with strong and steady, if not with fervid, admiration. He was, in the case of other compatriots, a little prone to mistake geese for swans. But one seems to gather that the Ettrick Shepherd appealed more to his marvellously kind heart than to his admiration; that he believed Hogg had not achieved greatness as a poet seems as clear as that he believed he ought to have achieved it. As a man, Scott estimated him (as he estimated most men he had known) with shrewd

justice, strongly leaning to the side of mercy. He did not, I think, over-rate his poetry so much as he over-rated Crabbe's, Southey's, or his own. If he did over-estimate his own, it was certainly not through conceit or *amour propre,* but because he had a mistaken conception of what poetry is. He had scarcely any idea of it except as narrative verse, charged with an immense weight of description, and made as much like an historical oil painting as possible.

He had no conceit, and scarcely any *amour propre*: of literary jealousy he was throughout life incapable. If he failed to admire the most poetical of his poetical contemporaries, it was through a failure in taste. Perhaps he had too much taste for it all to be good. He devoutly and spontaneously worshipped Gothic architecture, but he built Abbotsford, which he seems to have admired as much as he admired Melrose or Dryburgh.

One is convinced that he thought his poems finer than his novels, and of more consequence. They, even they, had blemishes, and it seems clear that he thought them special glories. His descriptions, on which he plumed himself, are the only passages one desires to skip.

When he wrote in his diary for March 29, 1826: 'A fine, flashy, disagreeable day—snow-clouds sweeping past among sunshine, driving down the

valley, and whitening the country behind them,' he never suspected he had just set down a morsel of real description worth whole descriptive chapters in the novels, whole descriptive pages in the poems. He liked description to be full-dress and of heroic size: to be worth much he thought it should be long.

Did he ever realise the splendour of the novels? He shows much more elation at the celerity of their production than consciousness that his greatness as a writer had been proved by them, and would be made impregnable by them. His tone concerning them is always that they were his minor-pieces, his pot-boilers, though pot-boilers *in excelsis*. His taste in reference to them was not infallible. He could not see that 'The Heart of Midlothian' should have ended with the third volume. He could not see that 'Waverley' was weighted with the opening chapters concerning Waverley itself. William Erskine was shown those chapters, and those chapters only, in 1805, and his criticism was adverse. For five years the novel was thrown aside. In September 1810 it was shown to James Ballantyne, whose judgment was also against it. Neither critic was wrong: the fragment only consisted of the first half-dozen chapters. The novel was not published till 1814. Scott stuck to his original chapters, and thought as well of them as Erskine and Ballantyne had thought ill. But

in spite of the book's success, they were right: not till the scene is changed to Scotland does its charm appear.

Those chapters dealt with English people in England. Scott is (most naturally) never at his best when so engaged. The English folk in England in 'The Heart of Midlothian' are its weakest figures. In 'Ivanhoe' and 'Kenilworth' we have only his second best, noble as that second best is. Much of 'The Fortunes of Nigel' is super-excellent, but the characters are Scottish of which that may be truly said.

'Peveril' is no instance to the contrary of Scott's being only at second best in England. Only in 'The Talisman' does he prove that among his wondrous gifts he had even that of boring; and there he is in England and farther still from Scotland. Where he is most Scotch he is greatest, and where he is nearest to the Scotland of the century in which he was born, is he at his very best.

He adored the Middle Ages, and would have been completely adrift could he have fallen asleep and awakened again in them. The soul of them was invisible to him: he took it to be chivalry, and it was the Catholic Faith. Of the Catholic Faith he had no conception. Of the Catholic Church he knew nothing but the titles and the ornaments—the 'properties'; and of them (re-

awakened in the Middle Ages) he would have babbled amazingly to such abbots, monks, nuns, and such following as he might encounter. Seeing an abbot assume mitre and cope he would have concluded that the prelate was going hunting, and wished him good sport; the sounds of a 'loud Alleluia pealing' through the arches of a minster would have announced to his critical knowledge the conclusion of a dirge.

CHAPTER XVI

It is only too natural that such a book as this, consisting of a series of papers appearing at intervals, should, between its inception and its conclusion, have witnessed the departure of several prominent figures linking us with the past.

Among them is that of Mr. G. W. E. Russell, whose name I put first, as being that of a writer who dealt much in *nugæ* such as these: indeed, his literary reputation was founded on and maintained by them. He gave his readers more than half a dozen books of reminiscences and *nugæ* of which, though all were eminently readable, the first was by far the best.

For him King Charles had two heads, and it was impossible for him to keep both out of his memorials together. If Cardinal Manning did not crop up, then Lord Beaconsfield did: if the illustrious novelist-premier was kept outside the door, then the Cardinal arrived by the window. It would seem to be a tribute to their greatness; for the unmitigated Whig could hardly like the

Tory prime minister, one of whose eyes was always devoutly fixed upon the throne, while his other was keenly (and hopefully) fastened on the people; nor do I believe that the historian of St. Alban's, Holborn, could love the Roman Cardinal, who was also Archbishop of Westminster. But Mr. Russell had the shrewdest instinct for greatness; and among his contemporaries, I believe, he perceived no public men in England greater than Manning and Disraeli. Queen Victoria was not a man, but by no one was her greatness more clearly recognised than by this hereditary Whig.

I only met him once, and that quite at the end of his life. It was at dinner, in the house of a very old friend, but the party chiefly consisted of very young people—a circumstance that evidently contributed nothing to the distinguished guest's satisfaction. What disconcerted him more was that there was excellent music and singing in the drawing-room after dinner. He barely even feigned resignation. It was only for quite a short time at the end of dinner that there had been any good opening for authoritative conversation. Into that narrow opening Cardinal Manning was summoned, not relevantly but deliberately. And the spoken voice, much more than the printed anecdote, was convincing that the great raconteur did not love the great Cardinal. He could no more dispense with him than a butcher can

dispense with mutton; but butchers are not necessarily fond of sheep.

Nevertheless through it all one perceived clearly that he knew Manning to have been essentially a great man—and knew it more than half unwillingly.

Of Dizzy he thought primarily as a writer; and I know no other man of letters who has accorded so high a place among writers to the author of 'Coningsby' and 'Sybil,' 'Vivian Grey' and 'Tancred,' 'Lothair' and 'Endymion.' I should be inclined to believe that by no one were his brilliant works so often and so constantly read. He appreciated much more than their brilliance: he was not blinded by their dazzle to their sagacity and foresight, their instinct for fact and reality, their political and social wisdom, or their intense sincerity of desire for the real honour and welfare of England.

Rabelais, we are told, neither knew nor dared any better way of teaching his lesson than by the grossness of his fable. Disraeli, I believe, was as serious in his purpose as Rabelais, and half hid it behind the extravagance, the showiness, often the vulgarity, often the turgidity, constantly the clatter, of his style and his method of delivering his lesson. His pyrotechnics were probably more to his own taste than ours, but it was not for their own sake that he indulged in them. He was a serious prophet, with an earnest message that has

been largely ignored, because the very means he used to make it read have to most people made it unreadable.

But Mr. Russell did not *only* admire Lord Beaconsfield as a writer. He was himself a Parliament-man, and in Disraeli he recognised one of the greatest Parliament-men England has ever had.

While these papers were appearing, another writer of reminiscences left us. Lady Ritchie's death snapped the only immediate link remaining with the giant novelist who was the only real rival of Charles Dickens. Her own contribution to literature would have been great if she had written nothing but her biographical introductions to her father's works. By his own direction no life of him was written: but those introductions sail very near the wind; taken in chronological sequence they amount to scarcely less than a literary biography at least. They are devoutly filial, and make us fonder of Thackeray than his great works always do. They hang about him an arras of dignity and kindness, of pathos and sympathy, that could never have been woven out of his self-portraiture in his novels. They constitute a biography more delicate than any *man* could have written; they are full of reticences, and their reticences are full of revelation: and they enshrine priceless illustrations of their subject's self-knowledge. They

show him as the best of the critics of his own work. In spite of all that is said to the contrary, a man who knows how to write knows best where he has written best. He writes:

'I sent away the first sheets of "Esmond" yesterday . . . it is clever, but it is also stupid, no mistake.' 'I wish the new novel wasn't so grand and melancholy, the hero is as stately as Sir Charles Grandison . . . there's a deal of pains in it that goes for nothing.'

He told Motley that he hated the 'Book of Snobs' and could not read a word of it. He told him, too, that 'The Virginians' was most admirable. He knew that Amelia was selfish, and that everyone in 'Vanity Fair' was odious except Dobbin.

But Lady Ritchie did write other things than the biographical introductions to her father's works, and it is a pity that one sees them so seldom on bookstalls and the shelves of libraries and bookshops. They belong to the family of 'Cranford,' and have the same delicacy of fragrance. They cannot be enjoyed by readers with a coarse literary palate. Her tiny volume, 'Chapters from Some Memoirs,' has every quality of an exquisite miniature. She was the heir of the author of 'Cranford' (not of the author of 'Mary Barton'), and has herself left no heiress.

While 'First Impressions in America' was in the press two great Americans were called from

the great Republic to the Eternal Kingdom. Of both I ventured to speak in my book, but of neither could I speak, while they themselves lived and might read, with the full force of admiration they had inspired. Cardinal Gibbons and Chief Justice White have impoverished America by their deaths as they enriched it by their lives. They were both of them illustrations of the patent, but ignored, truth that greatness is not achieved by intending it.

They were not thinking of greatness, but of duty. In both there was a singular and pre-eminent endowment of *quality*. They both attained great age, and in a long span of life each had done much; but they were more remarkable for their personal quality than for their external deeds. Both men occupied a high place, each the highest of his own calling in their own country, but their personal quality was higher even than their place. Each was profoundly imbued with the conviction that the greatest thing about him was that he was a Catholic: and of each that truth was clearly perceived by those who were not Catholics—perceived, recognised, and honoured. Of both men the non-Catholics of their great country were proud.

In appearance, the chief ecclesiastic and the chief jurist of the United States presented superficially a strong contrast. The Cardinal was slim,

lean even, of singularly light step and rapid movement, markedly alert and mobile in expression of face, his facial landscape constantly varying in light—as a stretch of country does—revealing and then superseding successive features. The Chief Justice of the United States was also tall, but massive in figure, with huge breadth of chest and shoulders, the head massive too. In step and motion he was rather slow and ponderous. At first sight he seemed rather attentive than expressive. In speech he was, till roused, slower than the Cardinal; apparently more willing to listen than to talk. His face appeared to express less quickness of interest and sympathy than the Cardinal's.

But much of this was merely first impression. When he began to talk it was with extreme frankness, with a quite uncommon degree of sympathy, and with a generous interest in his interlocutor that must delight him. His talk, never sharp, was incomparably shrewd: in a word or two he described admirably. He had the gift of conveying meaning rather by force of his mind than of his tongue. Lawyers are apt to be confronted with aspects of men the least amiable, but I think great lawyers are apt to ignore them; without sentimental optimism, they are seldom pessimists. Chief Justice White, one felt, thought (like Malvolio) nobly of the soul—not his own merely, but of the souls that are hidden behind his fellow-men in

general. He seemed incapable of scorn, and incapable of rancour. He made one feel that for other people and other peoples he had a deep, religious respect—all being God's men as truly as he himself. And he instantly bred in those who approached him a profound respect for himself. It was impossible not to be aware of his goodness: not to feel that behind his words, behind his life, God was standing, and he mindful of it. Huge as his body was, there seemed barely room in it for the great heart that was in him.

He was born a Southerner and bred a Southerner; during the first quarter of his life he was a Southerner. He died, as for the other three-quarters of his life he had lived, simply an American. He was Robert E. Lee's cousin, and he fought on his side in the War of North and South. The victory of the North left him with no rancour: he accepted it loyally as the will of God, not loving the South less, as time softened the memory of her anguish and her heroism, but loving America more.

It was poignantly touching and interesting to listen to one talking of Lee, who had been Lee's kinsman, who had been often his guest at Arlington, the guest also of Lee's wife, Martha Washington's granddaughter: who revered Lee's noble and great memory, who had seen him in the old days of his happy home life, and in his splendid fall; and

who could talk of him without the least tinge of grudge or bitterness against those who conquered him, the least hint of remembering that they had conquered the speaker himself.

Neither the Cardinal nor the Chief Justice had the appearance of extreme old age, though the former died in his eighty-seventh year, and the latter was not half a dozen years his junior. They had seen the population of their country multiply itself by eight, and had seen nearly a score of States added to the Union: only half a dozen of a long line of Presidents had occupied the White House before their time.

The Catholic episcopate of the United States has been prolific of great men: the Catholic Church in almost every State of the Union has been planted or organised by great pioneer bishops, men of apostolic sanctity, and of outstanding wisdom and capacity. Cardinal Gibbons had a distinguished line of predecessors at Baltimore. If the names of Archbishops Carroll, Kenrick, and Spalding are the best known over here, none of their names are likely to be forgotten over there.

The pioneer work did not fall to the Cardinal; but his work was finely done, and the fineness of himself every American acknowledged. Splendid a monument of him as the Catholic University at Washington must always be, a greater will remain in the remembrance of himself.

He is cited here chiefly as a link with the past, only just lifted above our present. He was born five years before Bret Harte, and long before the California existed that Bret Harte made Homeric. For a quarter of a century he had Washington Irving for contemporary; Fenimore Cooper lived till he was a lad of seventeen; he was forty-four before William Cullen Bryant died, and forty-eight before Emerson died; Thoreau, and Nathaniel Hawthorne were his contemporaries; he was sixteen before 'The Scarlet Letter' was written. Longfellow only died when he was eight-and-forty; James Russell Lowell when he was over fifty. Edgar Allan Poe lived till he was fifteen; Whittier and Walt Whitman till he was fifty-eight.

Without completing this very incomplete list, it may be said that of every American writer recognised as a classic he was the contemporary. He lived under five popes, and saw one Empire rise in the New World, and two fall. He was a priest when his country had its second birth in Abraham Lincoln's blood, and that red seal attested its final and complete union.

He belonged almost to the infancy of the Independent New World; and he lived to witness the birth of a universal new world.

CHAPTER XVII

As no one, so far as I am aware, has ever accused me of being *laudator temporis acti*, and I often hear myself protesting against the charge, I can't help suspecting that there must be something in it. Perhaps everyone who can remember nearly threescore years (I was sixty when the first of these Pages appeared) is by inclination a praiser of past days. One's earliest remembered years are like one's earliest remembered friends, and are seen through a glorifying haze, a mist of tenderness that may be the mist of tears, the haze of loss. If seen still at all, those days and friends can only be seen with our child-eyes, for they are out of sight of our present eyes.

As a child I know I was not so much *laudator* as *cultor temporis acti*: I thought no one could help it. I suspected no faults in my idol. It simply never occurred to me that there must have been many drawbacks to the privilege (which I envied) of living in the days of stage coaches. Even a dozen years ago, when I knew well a very

old gentleman of our village who *had* lived in them, his abuse of them irritated me; his insistence on the inconveniences and rigours of winter travel by coach seemed to have a smack of materialism. 'No doubt,' said he, sarcastically, 'it was very fine and picturesque to be driven in to Salisbury of a winter's evening, with your pretty snow deep on the fields, and deeper where it was drifted on the roads—to catch the coach and find all the places in the coach, or even *on* it, taken: and just have to drive back again!'

'Why, then you could say to yourself *A cold journey saved,* and return with pleasure to the comfort of your own warm house, your red fire, and your comfortable bed.'

'And how if your servants had gone out a-junketing? And you returned to find your house locked against you, and no fire when you did get in? And how if you had business in London next morning and couldn't get there?'

'But did you always miss the coach?'

'I never' (sharply) 'missed the coach. But I often found all the places taken, or all the *inside* places taken. It was the height of luxury to be the end man on a narrow seat of a windy, sleety night, your feet and legs dangling in the air, the water pouring down them off the tarpaulin rug, and the wind blowing up them. If you went to sleep a jolt at a corner was likely enough to jog you

off altogether; and to go to sleep (if you could) was the only way to deaden your misery. A stage coach looks fine on a Christmas card, but it was beastly to travel by . . .'

'How about furniture?' asked another friend, discussing past and present.

I must confess that I was born at a very ugly period of furniture. I am not sure whether 1858 ranks as early Victorian or mid-Victorian, but I admit that the furniture-dealers had their shops full of ugly stuff, and people who filled their houses out of them had ugly rooms. The hideous chiffonier was in its glory, and the rosewood arm-chairs 'to match' (a great word with those who liked the chiffonier) did match it with lamentable fidelity; so did the 'pier-glass' which adorned every moral chimney-piece—it was, in fact, apt to be a larger replica of the looking-glass rising behind the white marble 'shaped' top of the chiffonier. The front of that fell article of furniture was apt also to boast a looking-glass, so placed as to reflect nothing but the legs of visitors or chairs. The arm-chairs were not so comfortable as to atone for their ugliness of form: a crinoline could not be accommodated upon a comfortable chair.

Carpets were ugly too, and the ugliness of the pattern was made as much of as possible by running the carpet up to every wall and into every corner. They were apt to be extremely floral—and, beauti-

ful as arum-lilies, cabbage roses, hollyhocks, and dahlias are in nature, their reproduction *au naturel* in a carpet does not result in beauty. 'Conventional' representation was not attempted.

The hearthrug was 'to match' the carpet—the same design reduced in size, but not reduced in ugliness.

The coal-box was a great feature, obtrusively expensive, and much *en évidence* as to position. To make it match anything was a labour, though of love, and sometimes it did match the carpet by means of a painted floral panel on the principal slope—it was all slopes. Occasionally, in very luxurious instances, the floral panel was under glass; it was likely to be oval in form—as was the looking-glass in the front of the chiffonier. The 'pier-glass' and the glass on the *top* of the chiffonier were 'domed' and were crowned with bunches of fruits, and rosewood fruit suggests hardness.

If the wallpaper matched the carpet and hearthrug, great was the glory; and if the chintz matched both (and the curtains) it was a triumph. Curtains were much festooned, and over them was a deep (and expensive) vallance of fringe (also expensive), each twist of the fringe ending in a sort of tassel with a wooden core.

The middle of the room had an oval 'loo-table,' on which no one ever played loo. It

was sometimes bare, but oftener had a cloth, blood-relation to the carpet, flowery and fringey, and frequently chenilley. In either case it would support a Stonehenge of books, each trilithon consisting of brilliantly cloth-bound books, furiously gilded; they were described as 'presentation' works, and were not intended for perusal, but for ornament.

The centre-piece might be wax flowers or fruits, or 'Parian marble' groups, or single figures, or vases; in all cases they were guarded from flies by glass shades mounted on wooden bases, and rimmed round at the bottom with chenille circlets to prevent the ingress of dust. Why those figures, groups, or vases, were called Parian marble I don't know: they did not come from Paros, and they were not made of marble, but of a white china something like biscuit.

Ormolu was much esteemed: the clock on the chimney-piece was probably ormolu, and, if so, the candelabra matched it. If a knight supported the clock, two bigger knights (baronets, perhaps) supported the candelabra. But there were sometimes 'lustres' instead of candelabra; and it was a great pleasure to jingle the 'drops' together—if you were young enough and your hostess had not come down.

The pictures were very likely to be engravings after Landseer, or possibly chromo-lithographs a

good deal after the great early Victorian water-colourists.

The fender and fireirons were important and aggressive, of glittering steel, relieved by gilt.

Of course the rooms I am trying to describe were expensive. *We* boasted no such drawing-room: we were too poor; and our own parlour was neither fashionable nor actively ugly. I dare say, nay I know, that in the same houses with the costly, unhomely, hideous drawing-rooms, there were secondary rooms where people really lived, shabbier, at all events not so smart, with comfortable out-of-date furniture, and survivals of really good things made in superannuated periods of better taste. Up in bedrooms (not the 'best' bedrooms) you would find in shady corners things worth finding, but no longer worthy of the drawing-room, or morning-room; you would be still more likely to find them in the lumber-room.

I have known flounced and muslin-covered dressing-tables which were really beautiful old spinets in petticoats, bearing the names of famous makers—fine pieces of furniture, and sometimes fine examples of decoration, for we know that great artists have been engaged on this kind of painting.

In dark passages upstairs, in sewing-maids' workrooms, and in servants' bedrooms, there often lurked good pieces of Chippendale, Sheraton, or

Adam, especially in the form of 'presses,' tables, and chairs: too useful to be discarded altogether, too good to be tolerated in 'company' rooms during an age of hopelessly bad taste.

That bad taste was, perhaps, at its worst in objects whose sole, or main, purpose was ornament: only a really fine taste can make beautiful what is not intended for any use. In unconscious obedience to the same law, the necessary articles of furniture became uglier as they became more ornate.

All this time I have had in mind rooms and houses inhabited by opulent families in London, its suburbs, or provincial towns and *their* suburbs. The Victorian invasion of ugliness hardly affected the country-house. The country-house is not readily responsive to the pulse of fashion. In country-house drawing-rooms half a generation, or even a whole generation, works little change: the things are too good, and too well known to be too good, to be blown out of window by every gust of 'taste.'

Nevertheless I can remember instances even of country-houses grievously afflicted nearly half a century ago by the supposed necessity for fresh 'interior decoration': it led to a murrain of black and gold. Wainscots, doors, staircases, chimney pieces were 'ebonised,' and 'picked out' with gold. It spoiled the character of many rooms, and so put out of character their furniture as (in

one house I remember) to cause the hostess to 'ebonise' her fine old Chippendale and Sheraton. Not everyone admires 'marble tops'; but the old French cabinet-makers knew how to combine great slabs of Mexican-onyx, *rosso antico*, and *verd' antico* with most beautiful work; and certainly rare marbles are not beautified by a coat of black enamel lined round the edge with gilt. I remember a fine French clock, of bronze and gold, painted black and gold, and the frame of the magnificent mirror over the chimney-piece on which it stood.

About then, or a little earlier, there was a feverish revival of the passion (never extinct, nor long dormant) for old china. China-closets were ransacked and whole dinner-services 'mounted' for display upon walls. Much of the china was really old, and really good and beautiful; but it hardly gained by being affixed to wooden platters covered with velvet. It was only after I had gone to live in London, ten years later, that Liberty swam into my ken. He was at all events a real reformer, in so far as he knocked on the head mid-Victorian furniture; but his followers chose to denounce not only it but 'mahogany'—as if the most beautiful furniture English cabinet-makers had ever designed had not been largely made of mahogany. Being myself already a fervent admirer of Chippendale, Sheraton, Adam, and the French *ébénistes*, I did not catch the

infection of the Liberty-fashion. I was glad he had banished Brussels carpets, but the substitution of innumerable small 'Liberty' rugs on terribly slippery floors did not content me so completely. I remember arriving in a biggish London drawing-room, shy, awkward, much encumbered with top-hat, gloves, and stick (and instructed by the learned that to leave them all in the hall was contrary to the etiquette, as implying an intention of remaining all night): the floor was like glass. As I made amain to my hostess, surrounded by observers, the rug on which I had stepped carried me tobogganing almost into her arms, and my hat did leap into her lap. There was certainly a titter, and I could only murmur, like Madame Roland, 'O Liberty! the things that are done in thy name!'

I must say that kind and smiling lady became a great friend afterwards, though she seemed severely neutral as I skidded past a tittuppy table laden with fragile bric-à-brac.

So far as I can recollect, Liberty's reforms were taken by 'the general' to imply 'reform it altogether.' The timid (and perhaps not opulent) mistress of a drawing-room banished almost everything lest it should carry the early-Victorian taint. Sofas, easy chairs, curtains, all tables large enough to support anything but a single flower (like an ostrich feather in an aigrette) were sent packing after the Brussels carpets and the mahogany.

I can remember drawing-rooms furnished with almost nothing but 'old-gold' draggles, and one furnished (for a tea-party) with nothing but six small black engravings and three or four chairs round which the young gentlemen wound themselves, as if they were the serpents in 'Æsculapius's rods.' Those who had nothing to wind round, propped—propped themselves against the walls, against the doors, against the chimney-piece: their apparent weakness was equalled only by the genuine weakness of the China tea, which looked like a weak solution of dirt. But they all admired each other very much—and said so. The youth who had written a poem (about Cypress and Ashes) wailed panegyrics of the picture (of a dead rat) painted by the young man who eulogised his verses ('Goldener than pure gold'); and the anæmic gentleman in sage green, who couldn't act, was groaning anguished appreciation of the singing of the flabby, baldish, stoutish young man (in saffron and pimples) who couldn't sing—as we presently discovered in the back drawing room—while *he* conscientiously lauded and instructed a lady in ruby-velvet and sables (it was July) concerning the histrionic 'powers' of his eulogiser.

Perhaps there was no furniture to leave room for the mutual admiration. The back drawing-room was furnished with a tiger-lily and the lute, to which the man who couldn't sing—sang.

Our hostess knitted all the while, because it was Sunday, and in 1880 it was esteemed sinful to knit on Sundays: her fault (even if it were sinful) could have been but venial, 'on account of the parvity of the matter,' for she chiefly dropped stitches

One young gentleman, with a crutch that he kept forgetting to use, skirmished round the room; and another, who sat on the floor, on a flame-coloured pocket-handkerchief, conversed with a tall lady leaning over him like the tower of Pisa. When the poet recited his poem, with his head on the chimney-piece, she said it reminded her of Shelley, but gave no reasons. When the lutanist sang, another lady, who was deaf, and brandished a short black trumpet when anyone spoke to her, but only put it to her ear when speaking herself, said it reminded her of the wind in a tower. I had seen her, out of a window, arrive in a hansom cab with a Madonna lily and evidently sixpence short of what the driver demanded as his fare. In stepping out of the cab she had tickled the horse's back with the lily, which caused him to start forward, which caused *her* to plunge forward and reach the pavement more hurriedly than she had intended.

'Sixpence more? Nonsense!' we heard her expostulate.

'We' being a young man, also seated on the

window-ledge, and myself. He was not dressed in any particular colour, and had recently informed me (surveying the assembled guests) that the whole thing was a 'blooming circus.'

'Two to one on the lady' he offered me; but I wouldn't take him.

'Oughta to be ninepence more,' declared the cabman. 'A flower that size is passenger's luggage.'

All the same he had to compound for fivepence-halfpenny in coppers and a postcard, though with injurious language.

The poet, in his last stanza, lifted himself so abruptly from his semi-recumbent posture on the chimney-piece as nearly to fall over; but he saved himself by a grab at the bell-rope, which looked like a silken halter prepared for the hanging of a peer. The bell ringing loudly brought up the parlour-maid, rather flushed as if she had been making toast for the kitchen. We, of course, had no toast for tea, but split pomegranates.

After tea our window seat—there being no sofa—was requisitioned by the young man who couldn't act, to act his own death upon: he died, we gathered, at nineteen (he looked more) by a pond covered with green slime ('jealous green slime') without quoting the physician's diagnosis of his malady, but possibly from confining his diet to gorgonzola cheese, which his complexion suggested.

Ah, well! All those queer young men are, I

suppose, grandfathers now, with a determination of 'presence' to their waists, and given, perhaps, to complaints of the degeneracy of their grandsons.

Furniture is not so ugly now—that is to say, rooms are not filled with such ugly furniture, for I dare say plenty of bad stuff is made.

There came the fancy for old furniture, and with it the perception that the old furniture was more sightly than that of the Victorians. I dare say it is not all quite so old as it looks, like some grandmothers in knee-skirts, 'bobbed' hair, and portmanteau-coloured chests. But even when 'reproduced' it is seldom actually ugly, though your reproducer has a wonderful gift for seizing on the defects of a style and imitating them or exaggerating them, such as skimpiness.

Almost everyone's drawing-room is a museum, or tries to be: almost everyone has 'picked up' something—a cradle, for a coal-box; a Sedan chair, for an arm-chair; the door of a Lord Mayor's coach, for an 'overmantel'; a sentry-box, for a sitting-out place, half-way up the stairs; a settee made from the box-seat of an old Court carriage; a music-stool made of the perch behind, on which the footmen stood; or a bookcase made from an old manger. You may see a smoking-room panelled with dismembered Jacobean pulpits, and find that the bath was originally a horse-trough. You may dine in a 'Granby Room' hung entirely

with tavern-signs representing that martial nobleman. Your hot water (in very wealthy families) may be brought to your rooms in old leather black-jacks; and your porridge at breakfast may be served in pewter platters still bearing the name of the workhouse for which they were made; your hostess's dogs lap their water out of a Hispano-Morisco dish, and chocolates may be offered to yourself out of an old barber's lathering bason. The plumes of your four-post bedstead may be hearse-plumes, parcel-gilt, and the bedspread a pall (priceless if 'armorial'). The fender may be two plough-shares, and the fireirons four rails 'from the railing of the old house in Mitre Square where the ghost is'; of course the fire-shovel required the addition of a terminal that could shovel, and it was found in a flour-scoop from the Prince Regent's kitchen. The oak candlesticks in the smoking-room started in life as banisters, while the actual banisters were Georgian altar-rails, and the 'cosy' round the fire in the hall was a squire's pew split in two. The great chimney-piece in the same place has braved many a rattling storm, and even received the enemy's fire, for it was the figurehead of a famous admiral's flag-ship, and the gallery round the top of the hall was contrived out of her stern galleries.

Over the chimney in your own bedroom may hang a hatchment: the 'Resurgam' under it a

reminder, perhaps, that you are to come down in the morning without fetching.

To enrich your house with a double 'horse-shoe' staircase in order to make use of about a score of old box-fronts, carved and gilded, from a theatre, may seem a strong measure, but the result is at all events sumptuous.

A very handsome *garniture de lit* can be made of an old set of peer's coronation robes. I often see a sundial mounted on a disused millstone, and also a millstone used as a doorstep for a garden entrance.

Perhaps most of the above sound too expensive for any except very opulent homes; but it is not only in the opulent home that we now see this desire to make use of 'old stuff.' Even very modest houses have their 'bits' of Chippendale, Sheraton, Adam, Empire, or Louis Quinze, often quite genuine, though too often 'restored.' It argues, anyway, a better taste, and sometimes a quite valiant resolve to make the home interesting; and it does make it so to those who live in it, at any rate. A Victorian 'suite' could only suggest a bill; but a house full of 'pieces' or 'bits' picked up at odd times, though it may contain nothing of commercial value, is rich in association for its inhabitants, for every article has its own story—the story, maybe, only of its acquisition. And in this matter the London householder of moderate income is at little, if any, disadvantage

as compared with his country or provincial congener. It is quite a mistake to think that in London only rich buyers can find anything. Special pieces, unique or very rare specimens, really 'important' items, have their best market in London; but unimportant, though genuine, pieces are sold to better advantage in the provinces; and such pieces are more easily and cheaply found in London than out of it: the big dealers won't touch them. In unfashionable streets of London you have a better chance of picking up a reasonably good piece of old furniture at a reasonable price than in country towns: nor do I mean slums by 'unfashionable streets.' In nine cases out of ten the prices asked in such shops in London are not at all above the value of the piece of furniture or china; if you want to get it for less than its value, you had better turn dealer yourself.

The outsides of houses are also less ugly than they used to be. I remember very well how, as a child of nine, when I first saw London, the only thing that overpowered me was its ugliness and size, and big ugliness is worse than little. In half a century London has improved immensely in comeliness: much of it is now very beautiful; all of it is less dingy. In many instances the streets are wider, in nearly all they are more cheerful, and more clean; lighter, not only by night, but by day as

well. I think the people look cleaner too, and smell cleaner; the inside of an omnibus in the 'sixties was a frowsy, smelly place. Even in church, on a wet day the odour of sanctity was too strong for anyone but the angels. The inside of a mid-Victorian four-wheeled cab was apt to smell as if it were the mangy old horse's only stable, and the cabman's bedroom too: 'damp frowst' may not be pretty English, but it is the only word to convey briefly one's recollection of that particular smell. I wonder if the cabby really did keep his cheese in his 'growler' hidden somewhere in his spare boots, and any linen he might be awaiting an opportunity of sending to the laundry? It is more charitable to surmise that he gave nightly hospitality in it to his poor relations.

The London parks are much prettier now than they were then, and there are more of them. So are many of the 'squares' much prettier, i.e. the gardens occupying the central space of the residential squares.

There was no Embankment then; and the river-views from the bridges were in hardly any cases so beautiful as now.

London had then no fine railway-stations: even now it has none to compare with the terminus stations in New York—not even its newest so compares.

It had very few fine hotels: nor many fine shops or business-houses.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE writing of these 'Pages' has brought to their author the same sort of pleasure that he had in writing 'Gracechurch': in reviving old memories he has seemed to meet again old friends, many of whom he *can* meet, while this life lasts, in memory only. Perhaps the kindly reader will accept that hinted excuse for a certain lingering garrulity to which this sort of writing is liable. If so, he (it may, perhaps more probably, be she) will understand that, about to lay down the pen, the writer feels some of the regret he would have in parting from those old friends if, dreaming of them, he awoke.

A few weeks ago, in the house of a friend, the author was discussing these 'Pages' with a gentleman who praised that pastime of 'bridge-making' so often illustrated in them, and which consists in bridging great gaps of time by association, as, for example, in the instance of the writer's old friend who knew the widow of Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

'Well,' said this gentleman, 'I will gladly be a bridge for you—with Napoleon I. Officially

my grandfather buried him. My grandfather as Chaplain was detailed to officiate at the funeral; and he stood at the foot of the grave. The priest read the service. I have a print of the scene, showing my grandfather and the whole group.'

In 'The Last Phase' Lord Rosebery describes 'The End':

'For the last nine days of his life he [the Emperor] was constantly delirious. On the morning of May 5 [1821] he uttered some incoherent words, among which Montholon fancied that he distinguished "France . . . armée . . . tête d'armée." As the patient uttered these words he sprang from the bed, dragging Montholon, who endeavoured to restrain him, to the floor. It was the last effort of that formidable energy. He was with difficulty replaced in bed by Montholon and Archambault, and then lay quietly till near six o'clock in the evening, when he yielded his last breath. A great storm was raging outside, which shook the frail huts of the soldiers as with an earthquake, tore up the trees that the Emperor had planted, and uprooted the willow under which he was accustomed to repose. Within, the faithful Marchand was covering the corpse with the cloak which the young conqueror had worn at Marengo . . . during the next morning the body lay in state . . . four days afterwards the funeral took place with such simple pomp as the island could afford. The

coffin, on which lay the sword and the mantle of Marengo, was borne by British soldiers to a car drawn by four of the Emperor's horses, and thence again by relays of British soldiers to a spot which he himself had chosen should burial in France be refused. It was in a garden at the bottom of a deep ravine. There, under the shade of two willows, by the side of a spring which had supplied the Emperor with water to drink, had the grave been dug. The inmates of Longwood followed as chief mourners. Then came Lowe, Montchenu, and the officials, civil, naval and military, of the island. As the body was lowered into the earth, there were salvoes of musketry and cannon.'

The gentleman whose grandfather had been a chief actor in this memorable scene was 'bridge' to another, historic also, but more ghastly: wherein his father's brother, another son of the official Chaplain at Napoleon's burial, acted the dreadful and principal part.

Major William Hodson, 'Hodson of Hodson's Horse,' was born seven weeks before Napoleon's death. At four-and-twenty he joined the Indian Army, and soon saw service in the first Sikh War. At twenty-six he was Second in Command of the famous Corps of Guides; and in 1852 he commanded it. But in the crisis of the Mutiny he was made head of the intelligence department of the army outside Delhi, and raised his own corps

of irregular cavalry, Hodson's Horse. Everyone knew the falsehood and treachery of the old Mogul Emperor whom they were besieging. Hodson's revenge was frightful and pitiless. He hunted down and brought in captive the wretched old Bahadur Shah. The princes, his sons, Hodson shot with his own hand. He caught them in the lovely garden where their ancestor, the great Emperor Humaiyun sleeps by the sacred Jumna. They had fled thither for hiding. Hodson bade them descend from their curtained carriage, and shot them as they obeyed.

The scene is sculptured on his tomb in Lichfield Cathedral: a strange one to commemorate in a Christian church, and in a place where one would look to see recorded, if anything were to be recorded, whether in word or picture, that in the dead man's life worthiest of admiration or most illustrating that human pity and charity that appeals to God's.

Apropos of what was said in the last chapter comparing the furniture of our homes to-day with that of the average home half a century ago, I have been asked to contrast the houses themselves. That is less easy, and there is less to say about it. At no period does the bulk of any population live in houses built exactly at that period. The houses which I knew as a child, were not in many cases built then, but had been built earlier. Those which *were* then new were uglier, much uglier,

than those which we see being built to-day, or which were built in recent years. This is as true, or truer, of cottages as of larger houses. The truth can be pushed farther. The cottages built in my childhood, or at any time during the generation before my birth, or even during two generations before it, were as ugly as anything can be which is not pretentious. The beautiful cottages belonged to a much earlier period.

Almost all the cottages, and middle-class houses too, built during the nineteenth century, except its last two decades, were nearly as ugly as they could be. From about 1880 a marked *intention* of improvement became apparent. Perhaps, like the result of all obviously self-conscious effort, the new buildings had some tinge of affectation; but, granting that, they were more sightly than what they succeeded.

Another question also put to me is of greater consequence: 'Were the English of two generations ago more religious, or less so, than our countrymen and women of to-day?'

That seems to me a question for reminiscence. Can any of *us* answer it? As to any surmise of my own, it would, so far as regards the one ground of comparison, rest on the remembered impressions of a child.

As a child I certainly had the impression that my fellow-countrymen were believers: that they

regarded with a timid horror the exceptional few who did not believe, the timidity being due to a meek concession of abnormal cleverness to those non-believers; also I had the idea that general conduct was weightily, if not always consistently, influenced by belief—that, in fact, people in general were very substantially moved in behaviour by the direction of conscience, by the desire to obtain eternal salvation, by the dread of eternal condemnation and punishment. Further, that in their religious life, which seemed to me then a quite real and important ingredient of the national life, the principle of authority was still of much weight: i.e. that the existence of authoritative religious teachers, likely to know their particular business, and with a right to impress their doctrine as to belief and conduct on those whose sphere in life was different, was definitely recognised and accepted; especially that the Ten Commandments and their implications were of very serious import; that 'it wouldn't do' to overlook or flout them.

I do not mean to suggest that I, even as a child, imagined contemporary mankind to be vastly supernatural. I am sure that at ten years old I could recognise the truth of such immortal pictures as George Eliot has painted, of the practical paganism of much farmhouse life. Yet even her Dodsons and Poysers, impregnably respectable, were something better: 'unsupernatural' as they

were, their respectability had a deeper root than convention, though they may have been little conscious of that root; and the root was the well-remembered, oft-heard Ten Commandments, whose sanction came, as even Uncle Pullet knew, not from Parliament or the constable, but from 'Them as is above,' as Dolly Winthrop phrased it, the very shyness of the phrase being rather sensitively humble and unostentatious than really pagan. For Uncle Pullet himself I would urge a plea in extenuation of judgment. George Eliot has nowhere drawn a more perfect likeness of unsupernatural respectability embodied in a prosperous, close-fisted, untender-hearted, money-revering man of no ideas whatever. Yet Uncle Pullet had rectitude; and when he said of the proposed destruction of the bond, 'I should think anyone could set the constable on you for it,' I believe it was habitual moral sense that was shocked: 'the constable' stood with him for something higher than merely penal results—stood for law, grounded on the Ten Commandments.

George Eliot does not say so. But great writers often tell us more than they mean. No human 'creator' of a character ever did all the creating; that has been done before by another Creator, or it never gets done at all. An author's characters are real because they were not really created by him: once they give us something never made

by God, they fall into the unreality we instantly are aware of.

Uncle Pullet's idea of a bishop may have been of a sort of baronet who might or not be a clergyman—his natural capacity was for ignorance. But he went to Gareham Church every Sunday of his life and heard the Ten Commandments read; even he was conscious, however dumbly, that theft and fraud were divinely forbidden: 'the constable' was an instrument of Divine as well as human punishment.

To Uncle Pullet I turned as to an extreme case: George Eliot I cited because her people were the people of the opulent, prosperity-cradled, world-content Midlands among whom my childhood was spent, and to which my earliest impressions of my countrymen belong. They ate a good deal, and drank a good deal, and saved a good deal: as ideals of the supernatural I should not, even as a child, have pointed to them triumphantly. Yet they had a dumb respect for religion and the morality it demands. Perhaps they believed, like the Samaritans, they knew not clearly what: in God they did believe, in righteousness and judgment to come. And now?

A personal impression can be of no greater value than the opportunities of the observer. Mine may be narrow enough, and my accuracy of perception full of fault. But, such as it is, this

is the impression. That the English believe less, and obey less. That they are less dazzled by the daring and originality of the unbeliever, less prone to think he must be exceptionally clever—because whatever degree of 'cleverness' unbelief may imply, it is commoner, and they do not find it beyond their own reach or courage. That the Ten Commandments retain much less hold, partly because of a much less universal conviction of their Giver's existence, or, at all events, of their own Divine origin; and partly because they are less universally heard pronounced, and therefore much less habitually remembered. That there is a much less habitual attendance at public worship, a far greater repulsion from it, a far louder complaint of its tedium, and a far more frequent and graceless refusal to admit its obligation or use. That Sunday is immensely less observed: not because of a clearer perception that all days, and not only one in seven, belong to God, but from a revolt against giving Him even one, or even part of one, in seven. That the Bible is immeasurably less read. And from these two facts (if they be facts) has resulted a much more complete ignoring of God's claim on the life of the nation and of the individual, a great thickening in the obtuseness of the general and national conscience, a more complete emancipation from the dread of punishment, a tougher hardihood in

defiance of God's law, and its derivative, man's law. That (and this, if true, matters most) there is less recognition of the *idea* of goodness: that goodness is less admired, less credited, less generally admitted to be, if difficult, at any rate admirable and desirable: that it is a definite thing, existent if rare; and that it matters to the individual who by hard and patient effort attains some measure of it, and will be crowned by God's approbation and reward. That, on the other side, there is less shame in badness, and more effrontery: probably because badness does not entail the same disgrace; to be lacking good repute is not so disadvantageous, to be disreputable is not so disreputable as it was. That, in brief, the nation is largely less God-fearing, or less man-fearing either.

Plays, books, and newspapers seem to me to witness this. There was no cinema half a century ago: had it then existed I doubt very much if it would have dared what it dares every day now.

If it be suggested, 'We are less hypocritical than the Mid-Victorians,' I cannot say that the plea strikes me very favourably: not only because I disbelieve in the general hypocrisy of the Victorians, believing, as I do, that your hypocrite is a rare monster, and was as rare then as now: but further because, if at any time people do show a tendency to seem more virtuous than they are,

it must be a symptom of that people's regarding virtue as admirable and the lack of virtue to be a plain want and shortcoming; they at least are aware that in vice there is nothing fine, grand, or ornamental. Even to try to hoodwink your neighbour into thinking you more religious than you are, though it certainly is itself the reverse of being religious, shows that you are still in the position of knowing real religion to be a good thing, and worth possessing.

I spoke of my impression that in my childhood there was still extant a strong, if unreasoned, practical recognition of authority in religion: that those whose business in life was to teach and preach religion had some right to their position, and were to be heard. That feeling has, so far as I can judge, faded almost away.

Where those in the same position are borne with at all, it would seem to be for the sake of their ideas, personal and idiosyncratic, rather than for their adherence to the creed they profess. How far this may be the fault of the teachers themselves I do not propose here to inquire; but it does not seem, at all events, exclusively their fault. The hearers themselves are more unwilling to bear teaching, and disposed only to listen with any patience to surmise and conjecture, the more bizarre the more readily heard, originality instead of orthodoxy being the great desideratum in a pulpit.

I hope it will not be assumed that I meant above to state as the whole cause of any decadence there may be of religious life and practice among the English, during the period of my memory, their still growing neglect of public worship, of reading the Bible, and of keeping Sunday. It has been during this period that a system of State Education divorced from religious teaching has come into operation and borne its first harvests.

No doubt an enormously larger proportion of the English people are now 'literate'—that is, are able to read and write. But what do they read? And what is most cheaply and easily accessible for their reading?

'I can't read print,' old persons have told me long ago; 'I can only read the pictures.'

Perhaps it is 'the pictures' in a new sense that old and young read most greedily now. And what that study teaches we know only too well.

As to 'print.' Which is most illiterate, a people unable to read but accustomed through life to hear large portions of the Scriptures at least weekly, or a people that can read, and does read, only the newspapers of to-day?

But in reality I am not setting out to explain, to others causes: my occupation is much less ambitious—to admit the presence in myself of certain impressions, whose presence is neither consoling nor wilful. If a younger generation

denies their truth, I may say that, so far as the mere comparison goes, they and I are not so unequally placed after all; for though it is probable they may know their own generation better than I do, it is certain that I can know that of my youth better than can they.

Their generation will ultimately be what they make it; and if they make it better than what our fathers made that of my earliest recollection, God bless them.

Meanwhile I must say again, in answer to the question put to me, whereto the bulk of this chapter is some attempt at a reply: that, as it seems to me, the unbelief of my early youth was narrowly diffused and academic, the unbelief of to-day is much more general and practical.

It will be noted that I have attempted no comparison between the state of Catholicism in England then and now; because I knew absolutely nothing of that state in my childhood and boyhood. It was not till 1878, when, at the age of twenty, I became a Catholic myself, that I began to know anything of the condition of the Catholic Church in England, her numbers, her energies, or her people.

I have written, not about English Catholics, but about the English, certainly not Catholic, among whom I lived and whom I knew. Perhaps my memories flatter them: if so, a man of sixty-three has still contemporaries enough to correct

the balance. But I seem to recall with clear certitude much goodness that has now an archaic tinge about it—virtues of self-respect and rectitude, of right reverence for what is eternally good and admirable, of solid if not adventurous faith, of sturdy if not romantically lofty principle, of reasonableness and justice, of contented, unenvious industry, of submission and deference to law, that somehow strike as old-fashioned.

In the course of these pages some illustrious names have occurred, but few, for my life has been lived chiefly among those whose names, dear always to me and to their other friends, fame ignores as they themselves would wish. I could much better illustrate the difference between the people of my youth and the people of to-day out of books. George Eliot and Anthony Trollope have crammed their pages with people, as real as any I have known and lived with, absolutely typical of the country gentry and clergy, the farmers and the tradesmen, the labourers and their wives, whom I knew as a child and a young boy. Even my own book, 'Gracechurch,' contains immensely more pages from the past than are given in these chapters, and pages, because ostensibly fiction, of far more graphic illustration.

Printed in England at THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
SPOTTISWOODE, BALLANTYNE & CO. LTD.
Colchester, London & Eton

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00222 9129